

July 31, 2015

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148

Dear Board*,*

On behalf of the Neighborhood House Charter School (NHCS) Board of Trustees, I respectfully request your approval of an amendment to change our charter to expand the grade span to encompass grades 9 through 12 and to add 428 student seats to our maximum enrollment. These changes to our charter will be effective upon the approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The NHCS Board of Trustees wishes to make this change in order to extend the impact of our successful K-8 program by providing a high quality high school experience to students in Boston, and particularly in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan. Expanding NHCS to a K-12 school has been a long-standing dream of our community.

The NHCS Board of Trustees voted to approve this request on July 27, 2015 at a meeting held in compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25. At that meeting, the Board of Trustees authorized me to submit this request on their behalf.

The NHCS Board of Trustees also authorized the school to work with the Department to make any minor technical changes to the amendment submitted for approval if such changes are necessary to meet the requirements of statute or regulations, and are codified in Department guidance that was not adhered to in our submission.

The Neighborhood House Charter School is an academic success, is a viable organization, and is faithful to the terms of its charter. We opened our doors in 1995 as one of the first charter schools in Massachusetts, and the Department has renewed our charter four times with no conditions. A Level 1 school with rich arts integration, strong socio-emotional support, and a culture of student effort and perseverance, we are proud to be the recipient of a national award in 2015 from the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (CSEBOC) for our success to date.

The NHCS Board of Trustees requests that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve this request at its February 23, 2016 meeting*,* or sooner if possible, in order to give NHCS as much time as possible to begin the expansion process.

Please contact me at (617) 825-0703 ext. 3222 or at [kscott@thenhcs.org](mailto:kscott@thenhcs.org) if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Kate Scott Executive Director

cc: Joseph Corrado, Chair of the Board of Trustees of NHCS Cliff Chuang, Associate Commissioner

Enclosures

Neighborhood House Charter School logo

**Neighborhood House Charter School**

**Major Amendment Request  
to Increase Grade Span and Enrollment**

**July 31, 2015**

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Approved by the Neighborhood House Charter School Board of Trustees on July 27, 2

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# Executive Summary

Neighborhood House Charter School (NHCS), a K1-8th grade charter school in Dorchester serving 400 students, combines rich and structured learning with extensive social/emotional programming to help all students succeed in school and in life.

NHCS, which backfills through 8th grade and whose student population is predominantly low-income students of color, has developed over our 20 year history a comprehensive system of strategies and interventions to support the academic and social/emotional growth of our diverse population of learners. We invest heavily in an extraordinary corps of teachers and staff who are aligned with our mission and model and who embrace our culture of effort in which both students and staff constantly strive to learn and grow.

Our approach achieves results. NHCS has been a Level 1 school since the designation was introduced, and we have experienced four clean charter renewals, most recently in 2015. Our students – particularly our high needs students – routinely out-perform the state and city in both achievement and growth. Not only do our students master grade-level content, they develop critical social/emotional competencies that impact their long-term educational and life outcomes.

Our extensive dissemination effort, through which we have worked with multiple schools in Boston and Lawrence, has enabled us to share what we have learned over 20 years to positively impact students and teachers well beyond our four walls. We are proud to have received an “exceeds expectations” rating for our dissemination work on the 2015 Summary of Review in connection with our most recent charter renewal.

Over the past several years, it has grown increasingly apparent to our Board of Trustees that there is a critical need in Boston not just for more high quality public high schools, but specifically for an NHCS high school. NHCS parents first brought this need to the Board’s attention in 2011. Since then, the Board and senior staff have invested significant time in designing a high school model that thoughtfully builds on the K-8 program and ensures the organizational viability of the proposed K-12. In doing so, we realized that in addition to growing “up” through grade 12, it makes programmatic and financial sense to also grow “out” by adding students within grades 3-8. This lateral growth as proposed in our amendment request will give more students the opportunity of a Neighborhood House education and will ensure a larger cohort of NHCS 8th graders transitioning to become NHCS 9th graders.

The high school proposed in this amendment request has several unique features that make it a distinctly NHCS high school and that build thoughtfully on our successful K-8 program. For example, our high school will feature a rich and structured College & Career Readiness (CCR) program aligned to the goal embedded in our mission that all our students graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education on the path to life success. This program will pair classroom experiences with applied learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting. An NHCS-designed CCR curriculum spanning grades 8 through 12 will help students understand their talents, interests, and goals; match those to possible careers; and plan a course of action to reach their future educational, career, and life goals. In the 11th and 12th grades, in parallel with this coursework, students will pursue Extended Learning Opportunities to “try out” career fields through internships, experience what college is like by taking a course on a nearby campus, design their own independent study project, or otherwise prepare for the transition from high school to post-secondary education and career.

In addition, reflecting our long commitment to backfilling and to educating students who are high needs or bring other challenges, our high school will backfill through 11th grade. In doing so, we will welcome students who may need significant academic and social/emotional support to earn their high school degree and transition to post-secondary education. An enhanced staffing model at the 11th and 12th grades will enable us to work with students in small group settings and to provide a high degree of customization in addressing students’ needs. As we do in our K-8, we will design a system of supports and interventions that may include a summer academy, a differentiated length of school day, and, as necessary, a separate strand of coursework for those still struggling with grade level content even with significant support.

After careful planning, our Board of Trustees has the vision, commitment, and capacity to embark on this next phase of growth for Neighborhood House. Our staff, students, and families are eager for a Neighborhood House that will serve more students and carry them through grade 12. And the larger Boston community needs more high quality public high school options. In the hope of meeting that need, we are pleased to submit a detailed plan for growth, both within grades 3-8 and by adding grades 9-12, in the ensuing amendment request. We believe that we can make a unique contribution to the Boston high school landscape: a school that fosters the academic and social/emotional growth of its students and shows them that there many paths to post-secondary and life success.

# Mission and Key Design Elements

*Describe how the amendment request is consistent with the school’s mission.*

In the fall of 1995, Neighborhood House Charter School (NHCS) opened its doors with 51 students in kindergarten through 2nd grade. Over the past 20 years the school has grown significantly. We now educate 400 students in K1 (pre-K) through 8th grade. As we grew, our mission and values evolved as well. In recognition of this evolution, and driven in part by our most recent strategic plan, the school recently refreshed our mission statement to concisely articulate who we are as a school and what we want for our students’ futures. It now reads as follows:

Neighborhood House Charter School combines rich and structured learning with extensive social/emotional programming to help all our students succeed in school and in life. We strive to develop scholars who seek knowledge, embrace effort, act thoughtfully, and commit to the common good.

Many children come to us with significant needs.  We don’t give up on them. Our goal is that all of our students thrive at Neighborhood House, graduate from high school, and pursue post-secondary education on the path to life success.

We believe that an NHCS high school is a missing critical component to fulfilling this mission in the following ways:

First, NHCS invests heavily in making meaningful connections with our students and families. Whether a student begins Neighborhood House in K1 or a later grade, we develop a deep understanding of that student, including his or her strengths and challenges, perceptions of school, and hopes for the future. Students are welcomed into our strong school culture in which our school values teach the importance of actively *seeking knowledge*; *embracing effort* as the key to success; *acting thoughtfully* towards others and cultivating reflection; and *committing to the common good* of the community. We “don’t give up on kids” and will go to great lengths to support them academically, socially, and emotionally. We organize our time and resources around providing the supports – both academic and social/emotional – that our students need to be successful. However, the job of preparing our students to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education on the path to life success is not done when they complete 8th grade. We invest a great deal in our students and then, in too many cases, they go on to high schools that do not provide the culture, relationships, supports, expectations, and offerings they need to continue their positive trajectory. By creating a single K-12 pipeline we will be able to provide the kind of high school experience we know our students need and deserve.

Second, Neighborhood House has long been committed to offering as many children as possible – especially those that need us the most – the opportunity for a Neighborhood House education, a commitment that is demonstrated by the lengths to which we go to recruit and retain a diverse population of learners (70-75% of our students have typically been designated as “high needs”) and the fact that we backfill available spots right up through 8th grade. Expanding laterally in grades 3-8 and continuing our practices of backfilling at the high school level will enable us not just to educate more students, but to educate more of, and for longer, the students who need us the most.

Third, our vision for an NHCS high school has been several years in the making. The seeds were planted in January 2011 when a group of parents brought to the Board’s attention perceived gaps in the Boston high school landscape and presented to the Board a request that NHCS consider expanding through grade 12. In response, the Board formed a High School Task Force and worked with a consultant to conduct a landscape analysis and study the high school placement data and high school and post-secondary outcomes of our alumni. It became clear that there was not only room for another high quality public high school in Boston but a real need for an NHCShigh school. Ultimately, the Board made starting an NHCS high school one of the key goals of its strategic plan adopted in April 2013. Since then, a staff working group and Board level Expansion Committee have been tasked with high school research and design, the results of which are detailed in this amendment request.

*Describe how this amendment enhances or expands the educational opportunities available to the targeted student population. Incorporate a discussion regarding the key design elements of your school.*

Our request to expand vertically by adding grades 9-12 (and to expand laterally by taking additional students in grades 3-8) will greatly enhance or expand educational opportunities for our targeted student population. As noted above, NHCS has been contemplating a high school for some time now, largely driven by the fact that the existing landscape provides insufficient educational opportunities for our students once they reach high school.

A high school “designed up” from our K-8 program will mean that every student entering NHCS by 8th grade will now be able to benefit from an NHCS education through high school graduation. In addition, by expanding laterally and backfilling through 11th grade, many more students will be able to attend NHCS.

An NHCS high school will expand educational opportunities for students by taking the design elements that have made our K-8 program so successful and adapting and integrating them with best practices gleaned from the most successful small high schools in the country.

To understand how an NHCS high school will uniquely meet the educational needs of our target population, it is important to first understand the key design elements of the K-8 program. These design elements, which have been developed and implemented and honed at NHCS over the last 20 years, will lay the foundation for the high school. These design elements are:

1. Delivering rich and structured learning
2. Building social/emotional well-being
3. “We don’t give up on students so students don’t give up on themselves”
4. Developing extraordinary teachers and staff

## Design Element 1: Delivering rich and structured learning

“Quite simply, we need to expect all teachers to teach all students how to think and communicate effectively, and they need to assess these skills and benchmark expectations to what the world will require of our high school graduates. And this needs to happen every day in every class and at all grade levels. If we do this in all of our schools, while also stimulating curiosity and imagination, then all students will have the skills they need to get and keep a good job and be a contributing citizen, while our country will have a workforce that can continually produce innovations.” – Tony Wagner, from an August 2008 Q&A with Kevin Conlon of Harvard Graduate School of Education, available online at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/08/08/global-achievement-gap>

In the spring of 2011, the NHCS Management Team undertook an effort to codify the school’s educational philosophy with the goal of embedding it more explicitly and consistently throughout the school. The philosophy, which we call *rich and structured learning* and which is characterized by rich and structured learning experiences, or RSLEs, emerged from the educational practices long utilized at Neighborhood House to ensure our diverse population of students was acquiring not just critical knowledge and skills but a life-long love of learning. The work of education expert Tony Wagner and others has enabled us to support our approach with high quality research and data.

Rich and structured learning emphasizes student engagement, builds higher order thinking skills like creativity and problem solving, and facilitates deeper understanding. RSLEs require much of the teacher in terms of preparation, planning, and assessment, but put the onus on the student to do the work.

RSLEs are the means through which NHCS purposefully and explicitly develops in students the academic competencies and habits of mind and work that are necessary for their success in further education and in life.

A “rich” learning experience will:

* Allow entry through personal and/or emotional connections that are engaging, relevant, applied, and often interdisciplinary
* Integrate with and leverage our strong creative arts program
* Differentiate for interests and learning styles
* Promote student choice and voice, and inspire reflection
* Emphasize the 4 C’s of 21st century learning: collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking

A “structured” learning experience will:

* Align to the Massachusetts Common Core standards and focus on explicit teaching objectives for knowledge and skills
* Be well-planned and thoughtful about timing and pacing
* Differentiate for ability levels while ensuring all students do grade level work
* Set clear and consistent expectations and provide exemplars and rubrics
* Emphasize both content and process skills
* Assess student learning and inform planning to ensure all students can demonstrate mastery

An example to illustrate Design Element 1: 4th Grade Year-End Project

Students became architects whose task was to design a useful addition to the NHCS school building.  The RSLE integrated math, science, visual arts, and literacy as well as the 4 C’s of 21st century learning that we emphasize at NHCS: collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking. In science class the students studied climate change and global warming, and in math they had recently completed a geometry unit. The students met with a professional architect from a major Boston firm, who showed them blueprints and pictures of buildings he had designed and answered their questions about the design process. As with all guest speakers at NHCS, he also discussed the educational path that led to his profession, explaining how many years of undergraduate and graduate schooling it took to become an architect. Once students understood the principles of architecture, they created their own blueprints, using the actual plot plan of our school building as the starting point.  Integrating their knowledge of climate change and natural resources with their understanding of geometry, students created many interesting additions including swimming pools powered by solar panels, indoor gardens with passive solar light, and, of course, the requisite trampoline/ice-cream room. They then wrote a final essay describing their project and presented their project to their peers and families.

## Design Element 2: Building social/emotional well-being

“SEL [Social Emotional Learning] is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively. Competence in the use of SEL skills is promoted in the context of safe and supportive school, family, and community learning environments in which children feel valued and respected and connected to and engaged in learning. SEL is fundamental not only to children’s social and emotional development but also to their health, ethical development, citizenship, motivation to achieve, and academic learning as well.” – Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), from “Frequently Asked Questions,” available online at <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/frequently-asked-questions/>

NHCS has long recognized that social and emotional factors directly impact student engagement, achievement, and long-term educational and life outcomes, and we have a history that few schools can claim of dedicating significant resources to social/emotional learning.

Indeed, the strength of our social/emotional learning program has frequently been recognized. In 2015, we received an “exceeds expectations” rating under “Social, Emotional, and Health Needs” on the Summary of Review prepared by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) in connection with our charter renewal. This rating means that NHCS “fully and consistently meets the criterion and is a potential exemplar in this area.” Also in 2015, NHCS was proud to be one of three schools nationally to receive a prestigious award from the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC). COSEBOC supports schools dedicated to the social, emotional, and academic development of boys of color.

Guided by research done by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the Partnership in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR), NHCS’s social/emotional learning program is based on the philosophy that all students have strengths and struggles that affect how they learn, behave, and interact with others; and that helping students build resiliency and social/emotional intelligence will better equip them for success in school and in life. The goal of our program is to support the development of CASEL’s five social/emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

We do this through:

* A **consistent approach and universal language** among all teachers and staff to integrating social/emotional learning within the classroom and to recognizing and responding to students’ social/emotional strengths and struggles
* **Social/emotional learning groups for all students** that build a caring community and directly teach resiliency skills and social/emotional competencies at every grade level
* A **school climate survey and other assessment tools** to collect data on student outcomes relating to social/emotional learning and guide decision-making around programming and services
* A **highly trained Student Support Team** that utilizes an innovative and effective system in partnership with classroom teachers to ensure that all students get the support and services they need in a timely fashion and with critical follow-up
* **Strategically cultivated partnerships** that enhance our capacity to provide high quality social/emotional programs and services to our students
* **Ongoing professional development** and other trainings for teachers and staff to drive continuous learning and improvement around social/emotional learning and keep our staff current on the latest research and best practices

An example to illustrate Design Element 2: *Ready, Set, Action* Social/Emotional Learning Group

All 1st and 2nd graders participate in *Ready, Set, Action* on a weekly basis*.* The curriculum was developed by PEAR and modified by NHCS to meet the needs of our students. *Ready, Set, Action* engages students by tapping into their strength of being action oriented. Through various activities such as group juggling and post-activity debriefs from these group experiences, students learn to become more reflective and better able to control their impulses. They also practice skills necessary to developing healthy relationships. The goal is not only for students to develop these strengths in the group, but also to practice them in their daily lives. While *Ready, Set, Action* primarily engages students kinesthetically, each activity also helps students feel part of a caring community, find their voice, and understand the importance of reflection in acquiring knowledge and developing self-awareness.

## Design Element 3: “We don’t give up on students so students don’t give up on themselves”

“*[G]rowth mindset* is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts.  Although people may differ in every which way – in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests or temperaments – everyone can change and grow through application and experience.” – Carol Dweck, from *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, page 7, published by Ballantine Books, 2007.

NHCS has always taught that “effort is the key to life success,” a concept that has since been validated by the research of Carol Dweck and others. Design Element 3 encompasses a web of strategies, practices, and interventions that build an effort-based culture, signal “we don’t give up on kids,” and support student learning and growth.

We do this through:

* Clear and consistent communication of the idea that hard work is the key to life success and that failure is necessary for learning and growth
* Explicit teaching of the science behind brain development and growth mindset research
* Recognitions for achievement and growth, with equal emphasis on both
* A behavior management system that intentionally results in low suspension rates and almost never leads to expulsion
* Heterogeneous full inclusion classrooms in all grades and subjects with a co-teaching model that enables flexible and frequent small group instruction to the benefit of all learners
* Ensuring that every student does grade level work every day and requiring that students redo work as part of the learning process
* A teaching fellows program to affordably offer a student to teacher ratio of 11:1
* Ample time for small group and one-on-one academic support including scheduled time for classroom teachers to provide extra help in literacy and math
* A course coaching program that includes daily parent contact
* After school homework club and summer school for students needing extra support
* Sophisticated use of assessment data to inform instruction, plan interventions, and ensure all students are learning and growing

An example to illustrate Design Element 3: A Struggling Student Receives Support and Learns Effort

When Ashana came to NHCS half way through 4th grade, she was a quiet and sweet girl who rarely spoke during whole class discussions.  It quickly became clear that Ashana had some significant skill deficits.  She was placed in daily small group literacy intervention and met with the math interventionist three times a week.  Still Ashana continued to struggle. By 5th grade, frustrated and lacking confidence, Ashana became withdrawn and reluctant to put effort into her learning. Her 5th grade teachers and our Student Support Team coordinated an action plan. She was placed in afterschool course coaching to help her complete her assignments, stay organized, and study for exams. She also received additional instruction from her primary teacher during intervention time.  The results of her special education testing demonstrated that Ashana had a communication disorder and a specific learning disability in reading.  The teachers’ ongoing message to Ashana was that there were parts of learning that were difficult for her, but with her own hard work and support from her teachers she would be successful.  At first Ashana was reluctant to put in the extra effort to revise work for a better grade. On a day when Ashana was particularly resistant, her teacher asked her to watch as she entered Ashana’s revised grades into the digital grade book. Ashana’s average went up each time a new grade was entered. The teacher also pointed out her quiz average, which for the first time was in the B range. Ashana saw that extra effort could affect her grades and learning, and she began to commit herself to her school work.  By 7th grade Ashana was a confident student, requesting a seat at the front of the class, participating regularly, and staying after school to ask questions of her teachers. Ashana’s success was evident to all at 8th grade commencement when she walked across the stage wearing an honor cord, proud of her hard-won A average.  A student who had come to us with low skills, learning challenges, and a poor work ethic was graduating in the top of her class.

## Design Element 4: Developing extraordinary teachers and staff

“After all, great teachers are the heart of successful schools, but teachers alone can’t make a school succeed or fail. The environments where they work, and particularly the school leaders who nurture and shape those environments, play an important role in setting teachers up to do their best work in the classroom.” – TNTP (The New Teacher Project), from “Greenhouse Schools in Boston: School Leadership Practices Across a High-Performing Charter Sector,” page 1, available online at <http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_Greenhouse_Schools_in_Boston_2015.pdf>

No matter how innovative and well-designed our program may be, its ultimate effectiveness rests on the ability of our teachers and staff to execute it with skill, commitment, and compassion. Therefore NHCS invests heavily in systems and practices designed to recruit, develop, and retain extraordinary teachers and staff.

Our recruiting strategy is to find candidates with outstanding potential who share our mission and values and who reflect our student population. To do so, we have developed a detailed list of the competencies and qualities we are looking for and a multi-stage screening and interview process.

Our skilled instructional leadership team invests significantly in teachers’ development. Some examples include:

* Instilling a shared understanding of what “great teaching” at NHCS looks like as detailed in NHCS’s Best Practices for Instruction and Behavior Management (see Appendix A)
* Clear and consistent coaching and support for teachers to align and improve their practice
* High quality professional development for teachers, delivered through weekly sessions with follow-up to help teachers as they integrate professional learning into their practice
* Frequent observation and feedback sessions, particularly for new teachers, and follow-up to support effective instruction
* Coaching from instructional leaders and peer-to-peer learning
* New Teacher Academy to onboard and build camaraderie among new teachers and veteran mentoring for new teachers
* Ample time for collaboration and planning in grade level and content area teams
* Strong systems and processes around goal-setting, accountability, and evaluation
* Intentional development of a professional culture of continuous learning and improvement and high expectations that values hard work, integrity, and collaboration
* Collaborative planning time to refine and align NHCS’s rigorous and engaging standards-based curriculum

Strategies for retaining our best teachers and staff include:

* A new compensation system designed with staff input that is fair and transparent and will be revisited every 4-5 years
* Opportunities for leadership and professional growth
* The Leventhal Award for New Teachers and the Leventhal Prize for Teaching Excellence that provide recognition and a monetary award, funded by an endowment, for outstanding work
* An active teacher-led Quality of Life Committee that serves as a mechanism for management and teachers to test ideas with each other, hear and address concerns, and share information
* A Teacher Leadership Team that facilitates cluster meetings, informs professional development, and helps universalize instructional practices
* A Board level Teachers’ Compensation and Benefits Committee that helps make teacher and staff compensation a priority, looks for other ways to recognize and reward teachers and staff, and supports strategies to build a strong and positive professional culture

Recently, we have begun to use the New Teacher Project’s Professional Culture Insight Survey to monitor how effectively we are performing across a variety of dimensions that together signal a strong professional culture in which teachers feel supported, developed, and valued and that aligns to positive student outcomes. The Insight Survey has given us valuable feedback with respect to our teacher recruitment, development, and retention strategies and enables us to benchmark our professional culture as perceived by teachers against those of other high performing schools.

Some examples from the fall 2014 Insight Survey include:

* 94% of NHCS teachers (as compared to 76% in the sector) say that “my school is a good place to teach and learn”
* 95% of NHCS teachers (as compared to 77% in the sector) say that “my school leaders articulate a clear overarching vision that drives priorities, goals and decision-making within the school”
* 91% of NHCS teachers (as compared to 82% in the sector) say that “my school is committed to improving my instructional practice”

An example to illustrate Design Element 4: With Support, a New Teacher Becomes a Great Teacher

Lisa Nam, our 4th grade English language arts (ELA) and social studies teacher, came to NHCS right out of college with great natural instincts for teaching and little experience. In her first year of teaching, NHCS provided effective supervision, support, and coaching to ensure that she and her students had a successful year. Early in the summer before her first year, Lisa spent several days meeting with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, diving deeply into the 4th grade curriculum. Lisa’s year officially began with our week-long New Teacher Academy in August, during which she learned about NHCS’s mission and values, teaching norms, and behavioral management strategies as well as operational systems and procedures. During the school year, Lisa attended over 40 hours of professional development focused on how to effectively prepare students for Common Core and PARCC aligned writing tasks, technology integration, and social/emotional learning. She also participated in over 30 hours of supported professional time through department and grade level meetings. In social studies department meetings Lisa developed a deeper understanding of the inquiry arc, designed lessons and units that incorporated it into her teaching, and received peer feedback on those lessons. In ELA department meetings Lisa learned to interpret and action plan from assessment data and wrestled with the depth and rigor of the standards. In grade level meetings Lisa and her team thought deeply about their struggling students and created action plans and interventions to support them. Lisa also received the support of the literacy coach who modeled lessons, observed her teaching, and met weekly with her around instructional planning, student questioning, and looking at student work. Her principal observed over 20 of Lisa’s lessons and provided feedback on each one. Together they set goals around improved pacing and classroom management. To help her achieve these goals he modeled and co-taught multiple lessons. He also provided coverage for 90 minutes of non-instructional time every other week for her to plan and grade. Lisa’s mentor met with her both formally and informally throughout the year to answer questions and provide support. Although there was a point in the year when Lisa said, “I’m learning and growing so much it hurts,” we know this combination of expectations and support works. After conducting observations at NHCS this spring, a principal from another Boston school asked if he could send his 4th grade teacher to observe Lisa for the day because he was so impressed with her teaching practice. Parent feedback about Lisa was glowing as well and included a personal note from a father declaring that his daughter had the best year of her life in Ms. Nam’s 4th grade classroom.

*Describe how the proposed change to grades served will impact key design elements of the current educational program or curriculum model. Provide examples of how the key design elements of the current school model will be reflected in the additional proposed grades.*

We do not expect that the changes to grades served proposed in our amendment request will materially impact the key design elements of our current K-8 program. However, we have spent a good deal of time over the last two years exploring how the key design elements will be reflected in the proposed high school. One of the planning exercises we undertook with our staff-level high school working group, which met throughout the spring of 2014, was to imagine what kind of high school programming would be needed to best support the continued academic and social/emotional development of students who have benefited from our K-8 program. During this exercise, we chose three students to profile. While the three we chose are specific individuals, they are representative of the types of students we tend to educate at NHCS. This approach was so effective in helping us understand how our K-8 program should evolve at the high school level that we have chosen to use it here to illustrate how our key design elements will be reflected in an NHCS high school.

**Jonathan:** Jonathan is the oldest of three siblings, all of whom have attended NHCS since K1. Jonathan’s father is an officer with the Boston Police Department. The children were all born in the United States but their parents are originally from the Dominican Republic. At a young age Jonathan presented as a bright but daydreamy child who struggled to maintain focus in school. As he got older, Jonathan began to demonstrate increasing frustration with his peers and with academic tasks. He frequently argued with classmates and shut down when asked to do rigorous work. Jonathan benefited from *Ready, Set, Action,* our social/emotional learning group in which students work on physical challenges and process how their approaches would apply to other situations. During a child study process in 2nd grade, it was noted that Jonathan’s behavior and focus in art class were significantly better than at other times. As he moved into the upper elementary grades it became clear that Jonathan was an exceptional visual artist and his talents were encouraged and developed in art class twice a week. In middle school Jonathan drew inspiration through our partnership with the Institute of Contemporary Art, producing brilliant works during field lessons at the ICA, in his art classes, and during arts integration projects in his core subjects. As his confidence in his artistic abilities grew, so did Jonathan’s sense of success and his willingness to take academic risks. This coupled with his teachers’ persistent efforts to hold him accountable meant that by 8th grade, Jonathan was a solid student and no longer struggled behaviorally.

Now imagine Jonathan as an NHCS high school student. He will benefit from our four-year College and Career Readiness (CCR) course and our 11th and 12th grade Extended Learning Opportunity program, both of which are informed by Design Element 1: Delivering rich and structured learning. Like all NHCS high schoolers, Jonathan takes CCR, learning more about himself and his passion for the arts as he explores the 9th and 10th grade themes “Who Am I?” and “What Do I Want?” In 11th grade, Jonathan’s Extended Learning Opportunity allows him to intern eight hours a week with a graphic designer at MIT. That same year, his CCR class tackles the question “How Do I Get There?” and Jonathan researches colleges and universities that have strong visual arts and design programs. His heart is set on attending the Maine College of Art. To strengthen his application, our Extended Learning Coordinator helps him enroll in a portfolio development course at MassArt as his 12th grade Extended Learning Opportunity. Meanwhile, his 12th grade CCR course, “How Do I Transition and Succeed?” arms him with the knowledge and skills to take the critical next step to college. Jonathan is accepted to Maine College of Art and feels prepared because of his NHCS experience.

**Caris:**Caris and her younger sister started NHCS when Caris was a 5th grader. During her first semester, Caris, like all NHCS 5th graders, took a Holistic Student Assessment (HSA). The results of this assessment of students’ social/emotional health indicated to our Student Support Team some areas of concern.  A top student, Caris put a lot of pressure on herself to succeed academically.  Her large extended African-American family valued education, though neither of Caris’ parents were college educated.  In 6th grade, Caris applied for and was accepted to the Boston Latin School (BLS).  That same year, she experienced her first significant mental health crisis, a depressive episode that required a brief hospitalization.  Caris and her parents built strong ties with our school psychologist and our Director of Special Education and Student Support, who worked with her family and her doctors to create a plan for her return to school.  They also decided to forgo the acceptance to BLS, convinced that the smaller and more supportive atmosphere of NHCS was a better fit for Caris.  Over the course of her last two years at NHCS, Caris consistently earned high honors but continued to have significant depressive episodes, including suicidal ideation.  She was hospitalized on three more occasions as her doctors worked to determine an effective treatment plan.  Coordination between her doctors, family, and NHCS continued with the goal of supporting Caris emotionally and keeping her on track academically. In “Who Is She?,” our social/emotional learning group for 8th grade girls, Caris developed her sense of belonging and shared some of her struggles with her peers.  When things began to spiral downwards during her last semester, her classmates reached out to members of our Student Support Team to ensure that she got the support that she needed. Upon graduation, Caris earned a full scholarship to a competitive independent school.  Academically, she was well-prepared, and members of NHCS’ Student Support Team as well as our Graduate Services Coordinator worked with counselors at the school to help prepare Caris for the transition, however Caris struggled emotionally in 9th grade and had to take an extended leave of absence from school as a result of her mental health issues.

Now imagine Caris as an NHCS high school student.  She continues to be a strong academic performer, but will benefit greatly from programs aligned to Design Element 2: Building social/emotional well-being.  Caris is close to her advisor, who has the same group of students throughout their four years at NHCS.  She has joined the track team and finds that regular exercise helps her regulate her moods.  She is also a vice chair of the Student Leadership Council. Caris' parents and doctors continue to coordinate her care with NHCS staff, who have been able to maintain a high degree of continuity and knowledge-sharing as she seamlessly transitioned from the NHCS K-8 to the NHCS high school.  She sees an outside psychiatrist, but also has periodic check-ins with our school psychologist to reflect on her emotional state and plan for stressful situations such as a major exam or the college admissions process.  In part due to her personal history, Caris is interested in the field of psychology.  As NHCS does not offer courses in this field, our Extended Learning Coordinator helps Caris find an honors psychology class through the Virtual High School as her 11th grade Extended Learning Opportunity.  As a senior, she serves as a play-based volunteer at Boston Children's Hospital for her Extended Learning Opportunity.

**Wilson:** Wilson emigrated from Haiti as a 6th grader and attended a district public school upon his arrival. He had little English and significant stress from the violence in the Bowdoin-Geneva neighborhood in which he lived with his mother and older brother. In 8th grade, Wilson was offered a spot at Neighborhood House. His W-APT assessment indicated that he was a Level 3 (“Developing”) English Language Learner. Initially quite shy, Wilson began to open up in his small advisory group and also in “Men in the Making,” a social/emotional learning group in which our 8th grade boys develop a sense of belonging while focusing on what it means to be a young man of color in today’s society. Wilson worked closely with our ESL teacher and also received academic interventions from his English and math teachers during enrichment periods three times per week. He took part in afterschool course coaching which provided small group support focused on homework and study skills. When the 8th grade students began preparing for commencement, they selected “See You Again” to perform during the ceremonies and Wilson was one of three students chosen to rap sections of the song. Initially this was a challenge for Wilson, but with a lot of practice and the support of his classmates, he soloed, “…What’s small turned to a friendship, a friendship turned to a bond, and that bond will never be broken, the love will never get lost” to huge cheers from all assembled. It was a triumph for this young man with limited English to perform, and his words reflected how connected he had become to his peers and school in just one year.

Now imagine if Wilson had arrived in the United States as a 9th grader. Perhaps he struggles in a district school and is on track to fail his Competency Determination as a 10th grader. He and his mother meet Nick Shiggs, NHCS’ Family Outreach Coordinator, who has an information table set up at the Bowdoin Street Health Center. Mr. Shiggs informs them that NHCS encourages applicants through the 11th grade and has support programs in place to help off-track students graduate from high school and prepare for post-secondary education. These programs are informed by Design Element 3: “We don’t give up on students so students don’t give up on themselves.” Wilson wins a spot in our 11th grade lottery and arrives for orientation in August, during which he takes initial assessments in English and math. These place his literacy skills at the 4th grade level and his math skills at the 8th grade level. In addition to his core coursework and an academic intervention block for math, Wilson’s academic program includes a daily supplemental English class taught by our dual certified (ESL and Special Education) interventionist and a special education fellow, both of whom have received considerable professional development at NHCS on how to engage, motivate, and support off-track learners. After significant discussions with his advisor, Wilson and his mother determine that with perseverance and hard work, he should be able to graduate in three years. In his second year at NHCS, Wilson participates in an Extended Learning Opportunity supporting childcare providers at the Cleveland Community Center and discovers that he enjoys working with young children. After his third year at NHCS, Wilson has passed his PARCC exam and has the necessary credits to graduate. He enrolls at Bunker Hill Community College with an education concentration and a plan to transfer to UMass Boston. Perhaps one day he’ll come back to NHCS as a teacher!

*Schools are encouraged to summarize briefly within their request the school’s track record of success in demonstrating faithfulness to its mission, implementing the key design elements outlined in its charter, and substantially meeting its accountability plan goals. The summary should provide additional context to any recent circumstances in the school’s history involving these areas of the school’s performance, including charter conditions, probation, recent amendments, performance against CSPC as reported in site visit reports, or charter renewal.*

NHCS was awarded its original charter in 1995, the year that the first charter schools opened in Massachusetts. Since then, NHCS has consistently demonstrated faithfulness to our mission, successfully implemented our key design elements, and substantially met our accountability goals. Our track record of success is evidenced by four clean charter renewals since 1995, including most recently in 2015.  In the 2015 Summary of Review, the Department found that“[a]ll stakeholders have a common understanding of the school’s mission and key design elements, particularly rich structured learning experiences and socio-emotional supports for students. The renewal inspection team observed implementation of these key design elements through a variety of programs.”  Further, the Department found that “NHCS met a majority of the measures in its accountability plan.”  As we look ahead to the next five years under our renewed charter and our refreshed accountability plan, we are eager to meet the rigorous goals we have set for the school.

# Access and Equity

*Describe how the charter school has determined a need to increase maximum enrollment and/or increase the grade span. Strong evidence includes feedback from parent and faculty surveys, a historical pattern of an increase in submitted admission applications, and a growing population of eligible students in local region.*

In December 2010 a diverse group of NHCS parents approached then-Headmaster Kevin Andrews with a request that we start a high school. Their message was simple: Neighborhood House’s K-8 program was exceptional, demonstrating outstanding academic results while nurturing the social/emotional well-being of students. When they considered their children’s high school options, however, there was a dearth of high quality, affordable, nearby options. Many families applied to independent and parochial schools but tuition was a financial burden, even when scholarships were available. Families with older children who had already graduated described a stressful application process that yielded a limited range of high school options. They envisioned a Neighborhood House high school that would continue to build on the great work of the K-8 program to prepare students for post-secondary and life success.

A parent committee was formed to develop a presentation to the Board of Trustees, which was delivered in January 2011 to tremendous effect. As a next step, the Board formed a High School Task Force, which met regularly throughout the 2011-12 school year to explore the possibility of a high school. The High School Task Force’s research showed that students’ performance in high school correlated with the quality of their high school, and that competition for the relatively few high quality high school seats had intensified. Building off the work of the High School Task Force, the Board continued to assess the need for and feasibility of an NHCS high school as part of the strategic planning process it embarked on in the fall of 2012. Ultimately, in the spring of 2013, the Board included as one of the five goals of its five-year strategic plan to “develop a plan to expand NHCS by adding a high school.”

Under the direction of a new Board level Expansion Committee, in the spring of 2014 then-Interim Head of School Kate Scott (now NHCS’s Executive Director) convened a working group to develop a program model for the proposed high school along with staffing and financial models. The working group was comprised of NHCS teachers and administrators, including the Director of High School Placement, and outside advisor Rachel Hunt, founder of Salem Academy Charter School. While the high school design has continued to evolve since then, this application is grounded in that work.

NHCS parents have continued to express strong support for a high school. At the end of the 2014-15 school year, when the Department announced this unexpected expansion opportunity, we opened an online survey to collect feedback from parents and other constituencies. In the span of two weeks, we received overwhelmingly affirmative responses from current and prospective families, students, alumni, and others in support of an NHCS high school. Representative comments include:

*“This school is committed to increased achievement for all students and they deliver on that commitment. Increasing their scope to include high school aged students would benefit the entire community.”* — Father of a current lower school student

*“NHCS has been a great support for my children. They love waking up every morning to go to school. Having a high school will provide better interactions, support and education to my children . . . Please expand NHCS to a high school, it will not just benefit the parents but will benefit the children as well. I am a nurse and continuity of care is a big one in this setting and I also feel that continuity with education is also a must.”* — Mother of a current lower school student

Dorchester, as Boston’s largest and most diverse neighborhood, contains a disproportionate share of the city’s school-aged youth. While 16.7% of Boston residents are aged 5-19, almost 22% of Dorchester residents are in that age range. Indeed, about one in every four of Boston’s youth live in Dorchester.[[1]](#footnote-1)  Yet the number of high-performing schools in Dorchester is limited. There are only two Level 1 public high schools in Dorchester: Boston Latin Academy (an exam school) and Boston International High School (whose admissions are restricted to English Language Learners).[[2]](#footnote-2)  Demand for high quality high schools is likely to increase even more as the number of school-aged Boston residents increases.[[3]](#footnote-3)

NHCS’s own experience confirms these trends. Our enrollment lottery has filled the school year after year, and we have added hundreds of names to the school’s waiting list. As that waiting list had grown to over 2,000 names, in 2015 we began asking families to re-apply in each year that they wished to send a child to NHCS. The number of students on our current waitlist after this year’s enrollment lottery is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Waitlist size |
| K1 | 225 |
| K | 142 |
| 01 | 69 |
| 02 | 88 |
| 03 | 68 |
| 04 | 71 |
| 05 | 47 |
| 06 | 52 |
| 07 | 24 |
| 08 | 5 |
| Total | **791** |

These numbers show us that there is strong demand for seats at our school, especially at our primary entry point of K1. The size of waitlists is lower in the upper grades because historically our outreach efforts have been focused on the K1 lottery. Going forward, we will actively solicit applications for all grade levels, and we expect our waitlist numbers to increase accordingly.

*Describe how the school has determined that there is sufficient parent support to fill existing and proposed seats and/or grades at the school under the proposed amendment.*

We have determined that there is sufficient parent support to fill the proposed seats and grades not only based on the above survey feedback and statistics, but also on our direct experience with families trying to find the best schools for their children. There is pent-up demand in Boston for high quality charter seats particularly in the high school grades. In 2014, the Department reported that there were 3,284 students on waitlists for Boston charter schools in the 9th grade alone. Indeed, the 9th grade waitlist is larger than the waitlist for any other grade, signaling both high demand and a lack of good options.

Through our high school placement program we have witnessed how the current high school landscape affects students’ lives. After the 8th grade, too many students are not able to enroll at their best-fit high school (which is often an independent, parochial, or exam school) due to financial or other concerns. From 2012 to 2014, our 8th grade students collectively submitted over 1,200 applications to selective area high schools. In the end, 81% of students were accepted to selective schools, yet only 57% enrolled, mainly due to financial constraints. The remaining 43% vied for limited charter spots or enrolled in pilot or other BPS schools or METCO. For these students in particular, a Neighborhood House high school would be an obvious choice: free, rigorous, supportive, and deeply knowledgeable about each student’s strengths and struggles. In addition, our research indicates that the majority of our students who currently opt for an independent, parochial, or exam school would instead continue to an NHCS high school if given the choice.

If the Department approves this amendment request, we will not only open a high school, but will also increase the number of seats per grade from 3rd grade onward (see projected enrollment table below) with a significant new entry point in the 5th grade. While the size of the current 5th grade waiting list (47 students) may seem small in comparison to the projected increase in the number of seats (22 students), we believe this waitlist number is deceptive and will likely change. Currently, a number of parents of rising 5th graders choose to apply to other charter schools that serve grades 5-12. For example, our attrition rate for rising 5th graders was 23% from 2013 to 2014, largely based on students leaving for charters serving grades 5-12. Despite the attrition, we were able to easily fill all seats available. If we increase our grade span to K-12, we anticipate losing fewer rising 5th graders and are confident that increased recruitment efforts will boost demand for the remaining available seats at this entry point.

*Provide a brief summary of the school’s efforts to eliminate barriers to program access, including but not limited to, recruitment and enrollment practices, retention practices, and school policies, such as student support and discipline systems. Describe the progress made in attracting, enrolling, and retaining a student population that is demographically comparable to similar grades in schools from which the existing charter school(s) enrolls students. Describe actions taken and reported in their recruitment and retention plan to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance. Indicate how the school’s efforts may need to evolve during implementation of the proposed expansion.*

We make a significant effort each year to eliminate the barriers that prevent students from enrolling in, and accessing a full education at, Neighborhood House. Our attrition of high-needs students, who historically have represented 70-75% of our student body, has been well below the state average for the past three years, and our attendance rates have increased every year for the past five years to the current rate of 97%. Much of this success stems from the policies and practices that underpin the program design element we call “We don’t give up on students so students don’t give up on themselves” described above in Mission and Key Design Elements.

NHCS enrolls students at every grade level through a neutral lottery without discriminating on any basis other than sibling status, Boston residency, and minimum age—all of which are permitted or required by the Department’s regulations. In the past several years, we have closely re-examined our enrollment process to ensure that we reach the populations we were chartered to serve. The NHCS enrollment application once asked families to fill out and return several pages of information. Today, the application is one page long, clear and straightforward, available in multiple languages, and also accessible in an easy-to-use online format. A look at our statistics on the Charter Analysis and Review Tool shows that we serve a population that is comparable to similar schools in terms of students with disabilities and those who qualify for free or reduced lunch. However, we recognize our need to recruit more actively from the non-English speaking population and from families enrolled in SNAP, MassHealth, and other public assistance programs qualifying them as “economically disadvantaged.” A major effort for the upcoming year will be to consolidate and streamline all aspects of the recruitment and enrollment process under a newly-created Director of Operations position. The Director of Operations will be tasked with strengthening our recruitment and enrollment strategies, systems, and processes and with building stronger relationships with social service agencies and other referral sources. As we implement the proposed expansion, we will leverage our new relationships and improved practices around recruitment and enrollment to get the word out through multiple channels in target communities that we welcome new students of all abilities at every grade level through 11th grade.

Once students are enrolled, our policies are designed to keep them with us. Our disciplinary practices function as teaching tools, and students remain in the classroom as much as possible. We have very low suspension and expulsion rates compared with other area charter schools. Our strategy is early and frequent interventions such as targeted small group homework clubs for struggling students and a course coaching program that includes daily parent contact. For students with social/emotional struggles, we offer counseling, referrals, mentoring, and other responsive interventions.

Finally, we provide numerous high-interest options to maximize student engagement at school. In addition to regular classes in art, music, physical education, and technology, middle school students may choose among additional enrichments in art, music, sports, cinema, technology, and more, while lower school students participate in art, music, movement, and the highly acclaimed KidLab program—a hands-on learning laboratory where art, science, and creativity come together. Our partner organization PlayWorks leads physical education that incorporates social/emotional learning. Students in every grade go on field lessons throughout the year, with major trips including New York City, Camp Wing, Washington, D.C., and even Costa Rica. We feature partnerships with the Institute of Contemporary Art, Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center, and the Museum of Science. As we implement the proposed expansion, we will increase the amount of student choice available in the arts, sports, and technology and will put an emphasis on mentoring for older students.

*Explain trends and/or anomalies in attendance, retention, attrition, in-school suspension rates, out-of-school suspension rates, and if applicable, graduation and dropout data over the past four years. The Department performs a review using available student data in the aggregate, and by targeted subgroups, and grade cohorts using the* [*CHART tool*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/chart/) *at* [*http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/chart/*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/chart/) *Schools should explain any unique circumstances related to published school data, and corrective actions taken to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance.*

As mentioned in the section above, NHCS’s trends in these areas are generally positive.

* Our retention rate has been 0.3% or less for the past four years
* Our attrition of high needs students (around 6%) has been well below the state average (around 10%) for the past three years
* Our attendance rates have increased every year for the past five years to the current rate of 97%
* Our suspension rate is low—it has been below the statewide and Boston (district) suspension rates for three of the past four years
* Graduation and drop-out rates are not applicable

*Indicate, in a table, both the historical distribution of enrolled students in the present grade span, and the projected distribution of students by grade, including the primary entry points for new students, and the grades where backfilling will occur. The Department strongly encourages schools to promote new student access under the proposed expansion, and to explicitly indicate access for new students at as many grade levels as possible. The table should reflect the implementation timeline, projecting a five-year enrollment pattern, or more if necessary, to project the maximum enrollment and/or grade span requested. In your projection, indicate clearly the potential for variation in enrollment to safeguard against the need for a future minor amendment if granted.*

|  | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| K1 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| K2 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| 1st | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| 2nd | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| 3rd | 40 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| 4th | 40 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| 5th | 40 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| 6th | 40 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| 7th | 40 | 44 | 66 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 |
| 8th | 40 | 44 | 44 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 |
| 9th |  |  | 60 | 66 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| 10th |  |  |  | 66 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| 11th |  |  |  |  | 66 | 78 | 78 |
| 12th |  |  |  |  |  | 60 | 70 |
|  | **400** | **468** | **550** | **656** | **746** | **818** | **828** |
| *Legend:*  Yellow highlights indicate minor entry points for new students (n<10).  Green highlights indicate major entry points for new students (n>10).  We intend to backfill available seats at all grade levels through 11th grade. | | | | | | | |

Since we reached full enrollment in 2007-08 following our last expansion, NHCS has maintained a student body of 400 students. The enrollment pattern shown above for 2015-16 demonstrates our ideal enrollment at each grade level.

By the 2021-22 school year when we would reach full enrollment, our application calls for a modest increase to 22 students per class at grades 3-6, a significant new entry point expanding to three sections at 5th grade, as well as modest increases to class size at 7th grade (24 students) and 9th grade (26 students). We intend to backfill students at all grade levels through 11th grade and are allowing for a 10% attrition rate at 12th grade.

Beginning in 2016-17 we plan to officially increase section sizes to 22 students in grades 3-8 (class sizes have at times been this large in various grade levels when we have not had maximum enrollment in other grades). In addition, we will add an additional section each of 5th and 6th grades. Expanding first in these grade levels requires additional staffing and classroom space but, given the rapid turnaround between authorization and new enrollment, is most pragmatic since we already have a well-developed program and curriculum for these grade levels. New 5th and 6th grade classrooms will exist on our current site by reconfiguring our existing space. Our high school principal will be hired in the spring of 2016 and will spend the 2016-17 school year engaged in understanding our model and doing planning and program design.

2017-18 will mark the first year of our high school, with a 9th grade class of 60 students (three sections of 20 students). By keeping our first graduating class smaller than subsequent cohorts, we will allow teaching teams in expansion grades to have a lighter schedule in their first year when there will be increased planning and preparation responsibilities related to the new curriculum.

2018-19 will see enrollment at 7th and 8th grades reach its maximum capacity of 72 students (three sections of 24 students each) as well as a modest increase in the number of students in our oldest class. Given our past experience with expanding our K-8 program between 2005 and 2009, we know that new students more quickly become a part of the positive school culture when they represent a smaller percentage of the overall grade enrollment. Therefore we have developed a strong model to successfully onboard new students into our middle school program and are more confident that we can take on a new section of 5th graders each year and maintain our culture. Since the high school years will be new to our program and we need to develop a culture that aligns with the K-8 program model, we are being intentionally conservative with the year-to-year enrollment increases in our early graduating classes.

In 2019-20, we will expand the size of our 9th and 10th grade cohorts to 78 students (three sections of 26) and will enroll through 11th grade. We recognize and embrace the fact that new students enrolling at 11th grade may come to us with significant academic and social/emotional challenges. Our staffing model introduces additional special education and support staff to meet the needs of these students.

2020-21 will be our first year with a 12th grade. Based on conversations with existing charter high schools, we are accounting for a 10% decrease in enrollment given the fact that we do not intend to backfill at 12th grade. In 2021-22 we will reach full enrollment serving 828 students K1-12.

While we intend to fully enroll according to the chart above, we recognize that there may be variations in enrollment patterns. In our current K-8 program, we sometimes enroll up to 44 students in a grade when we are unable to fully enroll in another grade (the under-enrolled grade is most often 8th, which we attribute to the fact that we do not have a high school and therefore find it very difficult to attract 8th grade students for just one year). Under the existing model, we will preserve the ability to enroll up to 44 students in grades K1-2 if we are under-enrolled at a higher grade level. We have also been very conservative in our financial modeling so as to ensure that a K1-12 program is financially sustainable even if not fully enrolled. Therefore we do not anticipate the need for a future minor amendment.

*Submit a draft enrollment policy and application for admission which reflects the proposed change to entry point(s) and backfilling of vacancies, as applicable. The Department strongly encourages schools to promote new student access under the proposed expansion, and to explicitly indicate access for new students at as many grade levels as possible. [If granted, the school must amend its enrollment policy and application for admission and receive Commissioner approval prior to implementation.]*

See Appendix B for a draft enrollment policy and Appendix C for an application for admission.Bottom of Form

# Compliance

*Schools may choose to summarize briefly within their request the school’s record of compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws and regulations over the past four years, both in reference to school and board operations. Indicate in the summary any corrective action taken in response to challenges, and the implementation of any safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements. The summary should provide additional context to any recent circumstances in the school’s history involving these areas of the school’s performance, including charter conditions, probation, recent amendments, performance against CSPC as reported in site visit reports, or charter renewal.*

NHCS has a very strong record of compliance with the terms of our charter as well as with the laws, regulations, and guidelines that apply to our school. The Department has given us glowing feedback during compliance monitoring exercises. During the most recent Coordinated Program Review (CPR) of our school in 2013, Program Quality Assurance Team Member Tim Gallagher reported that past CPRs have been positive at NHCS, and that this review was even better.

We are proud of our strong compliance record and remain very committed to continual improvement. When areas of concern are indicated, as occurred during the 2013 review of our English Language Learners program, NHCS quickly addresses the issues. Our ELL Corrective Action Plan was closed in fall 2014 and we have taken affirmative steps to strengthen the program. Aside from CPRs, we also monitor compliance through regular staff reporting to our Board of Trustees and the state and federal government on discipline, enrollment, finances, and other areas. Premised upon our understanding of current laws and regulations, our school has policies or procedures in place to ensure compliance with:

* Nondiscrimination laws like Title IX (gender and gender identity), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, IDEA, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the ADA, Chapters 71A and 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and the enrollment policy provisions at 603 CMR 1.05
* Other Massachusetts Charter School regulations at 603 CMR 1.00
* Board requirements like the financial disclosure law, State Ethics Law, and Open Meeting Law
* Physical safety regulations (including discipline, restraint, and emergency plan)
* Finance and accountability regulations such as 603 CMR 10.00
* Public procurement laws
* Recordkeeping laws like FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00
* Teacher qualification and licensure laws
* Title I accountability provisions
* Employment, retirement, benefits, and fair labor standards laws
* School nutrition, vaccination, and wellness policy regulations
* Occupancy, inspection, and insurance requirements
* Other laws that may not fall neatly into the above categories but that apply to us

As we plan for expansion into the high school grades, we anticipate the need to devote greater staff resources to compliance. In September 2014, the school hired a lawyer in a new role as Associate Director of Compliance. This staff member will help monitor requirements that apply to high schools and tailor the school’s policies to meet those requirements, ensuring that the school is prepared to effectively implement this request.

# Dissemination

*Schools may choose to summarize briefly within their request the school’s efforts to provide innovative models for replication and best practices to other public schools in the district where the charter school is located. The response may also include dissemination to other schools, districts, and organizations beyond the district of location. The summary should provide additional context to any recent circumstances in the school’s history involving these areas of the school’s performance, including past or present grant awards related to dissemination practices.*

Neighborhood House is deeply committed to the idea that charter schools exist in part to develop innovative and effective practices and to provide models for replication in other schools. In fact, dissemination is such a priority for NHCS that one of the five goals in our most recent strategic plan is to “play a leadership role in the field and fulfill NHCS’s mandate to disseminate effective school improvement strategies by helping to improve low performing schools.” In 2015, we received an “exceeds expectations” rating for dissemination on the Summary of Review prepared by Department in connection with our most recent charter renewal.

NHCS has a strong history of forming effective dissemination partnerships in order to provide instructional leadership development and teacher professional development that align with district priorities, respond to a school’s strengths and struggles, and draw on its own effective leadership and teaching practices. In 2010, NHCS was asked by BPS to partner with the Harbor Pilot Middle School, which, because of consistently low performance, had been designated a turnaround school. For three years, funded by grants from the Barr Foundation and the Hayden Foundation as well as a partial match from BPS, NHCS staff members provided professional development and coaching for the Harbor faculty and leadership team. At the conclusion of the project, the Harbor successfully exited turnaround status, rising from a Level 4 to a Level 3 school. In fact, Harbor students outperformed all Level 4 schools in Boston on the ELA MCAS, with 44% of its students scoring proficient versus 29% at other Boston Level 4 schools. The Harbor also outperformed almost all of the other Level 4 elementary and middle schools in Boston on the 2013 MCAS among high needs students *and* students with disabilities. On the Cumulative Progress and Performance Index (PPI), a four-year measure computed by the Department that combines information about narrowing proficiency gaps and growth, the Harbor scored 86 for high needs students and 88 for students with disabilities. This was well above the PPI threshold of 75 that was the minimum required in order for the state to consider a school as making adequate progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps.

*Boston Compact*Since the conclusion of the Harbor project, NHCS has continued its dissemination work with charter and district school partners. In 2013-14, through a one-year grant funded by the Boston Compact, NHCS provided trainings and coaching to improve literacy for black and Latino boys at BPS’ Charles H. Taylor Elementary School and the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy. The results of this work were extremely promising. In 2014, the Taylor was in the top 10% of the district in terms of student growth in ELA.

*School Consulting Initiative*In 2014-15, with new funding from the Barr Foundation, NHCS launched a three-year School Consulting Initiative to provide focused assistance to BPS in order to (1) improve teaching practices, (2) increase student academic growth and performance, and (3) build the capacity and infrastructure to sustain these improvements in the future.

In year one of this initiative, NHCS worked at the network level with the schools in Southern Dorchester and Mattapan, and at the school level with the Mildred Avenue K-8 School in Mattapan. A Level 3 school, Mildred Avenue is among the lowest performing 1% of schools in the state.

At Mildred Avenue, NHCS provided direct professional development and coaching sessions for the leadership team and faculty to build a foundation of effective practice around the transition to the Common Core standards and instructional best practices concerning data-informed instruction, curriculum, intervention, and effective teaching practices. At the same time, NHCS helped the school develop an effective, skilled, and focused instructional leadership team with the capacity to sustain school improvement efforts in the future.

The NHCS-Mildred Avenue partnership has been a success. In each of the three years preceding the NHCS partnership, Mildred Avenue scored 20 or more percentage points below the BPS average on the ELA Achievement Network (ANet) assessments and 22 or more percentage points below the BPS average on the mathematics ANet assessments. In 2014-15, while in partnership with NHCS, Mildred Avenue scored 1 percentage point *above* the BPS average in ELA and on par with the BPS average in mathematics.

At the network level, NHCS provided professional development and acted as a resource for 15 principals in understanding the demands of the Common Core writing standards and PARCC assessments. When surveyed, 93% of network principals reported that the quality of the professional development sessions provided by NHCS was “very high,” with 7% (one principal) reporting the quality “high.” In addition, 100% indicated that they “would like to continue professional development sessions with NHCS in the upcoming year.”

In 2015-16, NHCS will continue its work with Mildred Avenue and other schools and school leaders in Mattapan and Dorchester under the School Consulting Initiative and will add the Thomas J. Kenny Elementary School, a Level 3 K-5 school in Dorchester, as another partner school.

*Arts in Education Model Development & Dissemination*   
In 2013-14, NHCS received a three-year Federal Arts in Education Model Development & Dissemination (AEMDD) grant to refine and share its innovative Rich and Structured Learning Experiences (RSLE) model. Under the grant, NHCS spent the first year working with outside partners to refine the model within the school. In year two, we partnered with the Charles H. Taylor Elementary School in Mattapan to develop a team of arts specialists and classroom/subject area teachers with expertise in the development and implementation of arts-integrated RSLE lessons. Our partnership with the Taylor will continue into 2015-16. In addition, we will deepen our effectiveness at Mildred Avenue by including it as a partner in our AEMDD program.

*Other Dissemination Activities*In addition to the above initiatives, in 2013-14 NHCS was invited to work with Lawrence Public Schools, providing professional development workshops to assist teachers and school leaders across the district in effectively preparing students for the ELA MCAS. We also designed curriculum for the district’s acceleration academies. We also partnered with the McKay School, a Level 3 school in East Boston. The McKay’s principal, Jordan Weymer, had been the instructional leader at the Harbor, and had found NHCS’s work to be of such high quality that he engaged us to work with his new school. All three efforts were funded on a fee-for-service basis by the partner schools/districts.

# Student Performance

*The Department will review the school’s academic performance based on available MCAS data, including student subgroups. Schools should explain any unique circumstances related to published school data, and corrective actions taken to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance within their request. The Department typically reviews the most recent 3 or 4 years of student data, as available.*

In 2014, NHCS faced a unique situation with regard to math instruction.  Lead teachers for grades 6 and 8 were both in their first year of teaching math, as well as their first year at the school.  In the 4th grade, a maternity leave replacement began teaching math in December and remained through the end of the year.  This replacement proved to be ineffective and was not invited to remain in a permanent position the following year.  The 6th and 8th grade teachers were somewhat more effective but, for both, it was a new curriculum and despite significant coaching they struggled to teach to the appropriate level of rigor and to differentiate for all learners.  Since 4th-8th grade math at NHCS is taught to the entire grade level by one lead teacher, these staff members had an outsized impact on our math results for the year.

In the case of the 6th grade, a cohort of students who were high academic achievers (many of whom left for the Boston Latin School at the end of the year) continued to earn proficient or advanced scores on the MCAS, but had relatively low student growth percentiles (SGPs). In the 8th grade, a less academically successful group had slightly lower percentages of students in the top two performance categories and low SGPs.  In the fourth grade, overall performance and SGP were both extremely low.

Of all math subgroups, it was our white students who had the lowest median SGP (at 29.5). Despite their low SGP, 75% of the students in the white subgroup scored in the advanced or proficient category (35% in the advanced category and 40% in the proficient category) and none of the students in this subgroup scored in the warning category. Of note, 20% of students in the white subgroup did not have SGPs calculated; all of these students scored at the advanced or proficient level.

Finally, while we had special educators who were supporting the special education students, given the students' experiences in the classroom, their SPED support proved insufficient to help them make the gains that our special education students typically experience in a year.  For all these reasons, our school-wide median SGP for math, at 47.0, was significantly lower than our typical math SGP, which has historically always been above 65.0. Lower than typical aggregate SGP in math coupled with a slight decline in aggregate performance (2014 CPI = 82.1 vs. 2013 CPI = 85.3) had a negative impact on our overall progress and performance index (PPI). A parallel trend held true for our special education subgroup.

Based upon 2014 MCAS results, math instruction became a focal point for professional development in all grade levels in 2014-15.  We hired a new 4th grade math teacher with several years of experience and shifted the 4th grade's structure and expectations about work completion and rigor significantly by having the middle school principal work closely with the team.  For the first time, the math department met together each week. These meetings focused on building norms and expectations across all grades for the standards of mathematical practice and rigor of questioning.  Teachers also used time to thoughtfully plan for interventions and re-teaching based on data.  These enhancements improved teaching and collaboration between both general education and special education teachers.  The math department chair also held weekly meetings with our 6th and 8th grade math teachers, both now in their second year of teaching. Individually and as a group, in 2014-15 NHCS teachers were much more thoughtful and purposeful about which students to place in interventions and how to spend intervention time, focusing significantly on our special education and high heeds populations.

*Schools may submit student performance data for other standardized assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics as additional evidence of academic student achievement. Please indicate and define the metric used in your submission. Schools are required to submit at least three years of data for all students and one or more targeted subgroups.[[4]](#footnote-4) Targeted subgroups may include, but are not limited to students with disabilities; students who qualify for free and/or reduced lunch; and English language learners. If the number of students in one or more targeted subgroups is below the threshold of students required for reporting based on the metric[[5]](#footnote-5), schools may include a high needs[[6]](#footnote-6) student subgroup where student data is aggregated into a ‘super’ subgroup of students with high needs adjusted for enrollment.*

Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment

NHCS uses this assessment in grades K2 through 3 to identify students’ reading levels and track the progression of their reading comprehension over time. The assessment is also used to identify students who may need intervention. Over the last several years, we have adjusted our benchmark expectations to align with Teachers College recommendations and the increased rigor of the Common Core. For example, in K2, the spring benchmark has increased dramatically from C in 2011-2012, to D in 2012-2013, to E in 2014-2015. Average student scores across grades and sub-groups show a steady increase over the past three years, demonstrating our youngest students’ achievement in reading comprehension.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2012-2013 | | 2013-2014 | | 2014-2015 | |
|  | % Proficient | % Failing | % Proficient | % Failing | % Proficient | % Failing |
| Aggregate  (K2-3) | 53 | 10 | 65 | 10 | 66 | 9 |
| K2 | 68 | 0 | 90 | 2 | 56 | 7 |
| 1 | 60 | 10 | 70 | 5 | 79 | 5 |
| 2 | 43 | 10 | 63 | 10 | 72 | 3 |
| 3 | 39 | 20 | 36 | 23 | 55 | 21 |
| Low-income  (K2-3) | 41 | 11 | 59 | 12 | 62 | 12 |
| K2 | 56 | 0 | 85 | 4 | 62 | 8 |
| 1 | 58 | 8 | 67 | 8 | 70 | 7 |
| 2 | 40 | 13 | 59 | 9 | 61 | 4 |
| 3 | 17 | 20 | 35 | 24 | 54 | 27 |

Early Childhood Assessment in Mathematics (ECAM)

The ECAM assesses students in three mathematical areas: counting, numeration, and addition/subtraction, each represented by a subtest of the assessment. At NHCS, students must score at grade level on all three subtests to attain overall proficiency. If a student is two levels below grade level on any one of the subtests, that student fails the assessment overall. Over the past three years, while the percentage of students who scored in the proficient category increased or remained constant, the percentage of students who scored in the failing category decreased steadily, demonstrating our youngest students’ progress in Mathematics.

|  | 2012-2013 | | 2013-2014 | | 2014-2015 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | % Proficient | % Failing | % Proficient | % Failing | % Proficient | % Failing |
| Aggregate  (K1-1) | 62 | 8 | 72 | 6 | 65 | 3 |
| K1 | 84 | 5 | 78 | 3 | 83 | 0 |
| K2 | 74 | 5 | 78 | 5 | 63 | 2 |
| 1 | 32 | 12 | 60 | 10 | 50 | 7 |
| Low-income  (K1-1) | 57 | 8 | 67 | 7 | 56 | 4 |
| K1 | 78 | 9 | 65 | 4 | 72 | 0 |
| K2 | 72 | 8 | 73 | 8 | 58 | 4 |
| 1 | 23 | 8 | 63 | 8 | 41 | 7 |

Achievement Network (ANet) Interim Assessments

NHCS has been partnering with ANet since 2008 to regularly assess our students in ELA and mathematics through standardized formative assessments aligned with state standards and administered by a network of schools against which we can measure student progress and identify areas of relative strength and challenge. In 2012-13, NHCS students in grades 2-8 each took four ELA and four mathematics assessments within a nationwide network of 254 schools. In 2013-14, students in grades 2-8 each took three ELA assessments and four mathematics assessments within a nationwide network of 333 schools. In 2014-15, NHCS chose to participate in ANet’s piloting of online assessments, aligned with the Common Core and possessing certain similarities to the PARCC assessment. Approximately 60 schools across six different regions were invited to participate in the online pilot. The online assessments were available to students in grades 3-8. NHCS students in grade 2 continued to participate in the paper-based assessment as they had done in the past. Approximately 300 schools took paper-based assessments nationwide; over 200 of them participated at the 2nd grade level. On average over the past three years, in both ELA and Mathematics, the average student score at NHCS exceeded the network average by 6 to 12 percentage points.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Distance from the Network Average-ELA   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | 2012-2013 | | 2013-2014 | | 2014-2015 | | |  | *n=* |  | *n=* |  | *n=* |  | | Aggregate (Gr2-8) | *281* | +8 | *275* | +6 | *273* | +9 | | 2 | *42* | -2 | *40* | +5 | *40* | +15 | | 3 | *42* | +6 | *44* | 0 | *42* | +7 | | 4 | *41* | +10 | *39* | +4 | *42* | +8 | | 5 | *41* | +12 | *41* | +6 | *41* | +7 | | 6 | *39* | +7 | *36* | +9 | *42* | +12 | | 7 | *41* | +13 | *34* | +7 | *37* | +10 | | 8 | *35* | +9 | *41* | +12 | *29* | +2 | | Low-income\* (Gr2-8) | *206* | +6 | *179* | +4 | *180* | +6 | | 2 | *30* | -5 | *22* | +4 | *23* | +15 | | 3 | *30* | +1 | *34* | -2 | *26* | +2 | | 4 | *27* | +8 | *24* | -3 | *31* | +5 | | 5 | *26* | +8 | *24* | +4 | *27* | +1 | | 6 | *34* | +6 | *19* | +4 | *24* | +8 | | 7 | *30* | +11 | *25* | +8 | *26* | +10 | | 8 | *29* | +10 | *31* | +12 | *23* | +4 | | SPED \*  (Gr 2-8) | *52* | -4 | *51* | -5 | *54* | -3 | | 2 | *3* | -20 | *6* | -9 | *4* | +7 | | 3 | *7* | -10 | *6* | -12 | *13* | -5 | | 4 | *11* | -2 | *9* | -13 | *8* | -12 | | 5 | *8* | -9 | *11* | -2 | *7* | -11 | | 6 | *8* | -8 | *7* | -3 | *11* | +3 | | 7 | *6* | +6 | *7* | +2 | *7* | +4 | | 8 | *9* | +3 | *5* | +4 | *4* | -8 | | Distance from the Network Average-Math   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | 2012-2013 | | 2013-2014 | | 2014-2015 | | |  | *n=* |  | *n=* |  | *n=* |  | | Aggregate (Gr2-8) | *281* | +8 | *277* | +10 | *272* | +12 | | 2 | *42* | +1 | *40* | +10 | *40* | +25 | | 3 | *42* | +2 | *44* | +2 | *42* | +7 | | 4 | *41* | +9 | *39* | +4 | *42* | +6 | | 5 | *41* | +13 | *41* | +13 | *40* | +14 | | 6 | *39* | +14 | *36* | +12 | *42* | +10 | | 7 | *41* | +13 | *36* | +19 | *37* | +20 | | 8 | *35* | +7 | *41* | +5 | *29* | +4 | | Low-income\* (Gr2-8) | *206* | +7 | *179* | +7 | *179* | +10 | | 2 | *30* | -4 | *22* | +9 | *23* | +25 | | 3 | *30* | -2 | *34* | +1 | *26* | +2 | | 4 | *27* | +7 | *24* | -1 | *31* | +3 | | 5 | *26* | +11 | *24* | +11 | *26* | +16 | | 6 | *34* | +15 | *19* | +9 | *24* | +5 | | 7 | *30* | +13 | *25* | +20 | *26* | +19 | | 8 | *29* | +7 | *31* | +4 | *23* | +5 | | SPED \*  (Gr 2-8) | *52* | +6 | *51* | -2 | *53* | -3 | | 2 | *3* | +2 | *6* | +3 | *4* | +23 | | 3 | *7* | -11 | *6* | -10 | *13* | -10 | | 4 | *11* | +6 | *9* | -18 | *8* | -16 | | 5 | *8* | +4 | *11* | +2 | *6* | +1 | | 6 | *8* | +2 | *7* | +3 | *11* | -5 | | 7 | *6* | +24 | *7* | +6 | *7* | +10 | | 8 | *9* | +15 | *5* | -1 | *4* | -7 | |

\* SPED and low-income sub-group scores in this table are compared with network averages for all students, not network averages only for those sub-groups.

# Program Delivery

*Describe any schedule changes anticipated with implementation of the new grade span, including length of school year, week, or day. Describe how the change in grade span will impact the mechanics of the educational program in terms of the daily and weekly organization of students and faculty.*

Neighborhood House has a 180-day school year for K1-8 students and intends to continue that model for students in grades 9-12. The lower school and middle school have staggered arrival and dismissal times to allow for ease of arrival and departure and this model will continue in order to decrease congestion as we add students in grades 5-8. Dismissal times for students in 6th-8th grades is differentiated based on students’ need for academic support with many students leaving after 7.5 hours and some staying for an additional hour. A similar model, allowing additional support, will be continued in the 9th-12th grades. Elements of our existing program that will be extended to the high school include a weekly early release for staff development as well as a summer program for students in need of additional academic support.

Additional students in grades 5-8 will require additional staffing and a reconfiguration of schedules to allow for lunch, recess, and specials such as art and music. At capacity the K-8 and high school will be located at different sites, and therefore will not share staff with the exception of some of the administrative team.

Weekly early release professional development for the K-8 and high school will be on different days, allowing shared instructional leaders to support both schools effectively and enabling department heads to attend both meetings when necessary.

*Provide an overview of how the current educational program, curriculum model, or whole school design, including curriculum and instruction, will be adapted to serve younger or older students, as applicable.*

The NHCS high school will be a continuation of the model we successfully implement in our K-8 program, which combines high expectations with appropriate supports. NHCS teachers will use thoughtful curriculum design to address Massachusetts standards, engage students, and challenge them to greater academic independence. Our rich and structured learning and extensive social/emotional programming will be adapted to meet the needs of older students. In addition to the Massachusetts High School Program of Studies (MassCore), we will require participation in an NHCS-designed College and Career Readiness (CCR) program beginning in 8th grade. The CCR themes will build on each other and provide students with a map for their future, progressing as follows from 9th-12th grade: “Who Am I?,” “What Do I Want?,” “How Do I Get There?,” and “How Do I Transition and Succeed?” In addition to the CCR curriculum, students in grades 11 and 12 will participate in Extended Learning Opportunities which will include internships, independent studies, online courses, or college courses. Finally, extracurricular clubs and sports opportunities will be another venue for students to pursue their unique skills and passions. The NHCS high school will have a schedule that allows for students to spend considerable time each week engaged in these opportunities.

NHCS will continue to message the value of embracing effort throughout the high school program. Students will be grouped heterogeneously in grades 9 and 10 with all students engaged with grade level work each day, and we will have academic interventions to support struggling students. In grades 11 and 12, students will have more latitude to self-select programming that matches their goals, interests, and abilities. NHCS will offer grade level as well as advanced placement courses. NHCS will also offer remedial classes as necessary. Students, guided by conversations with teachers, advisors, and their families, will make course selections and all classes will be open to all students.

*Briefly describe the process that is used to align curriculum to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Include in your response the processes used to align curriculum to the 2011 Mathematics and English Language Arts curriculum frameworks incorporating the Common Core State Standards, and to incorporate the World-class Design and assessment English Language Development (WIDA ELD) standards into content area curricula as an example of prior effective implementation.*

Our Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) has overseen the process of curriculum alignment, including the changes necessary to align with the 2011 frameworks and the WIDA ELD standards. Teachers have worked in grade level or department teams to create scope and sequence documents and unit plans that are backwards-mapped from the expectations set forth in the standards. Considerable professional time during August and on weekly early release days during the school year has been set aside for this work. In addition to focusing on the standards, teachers spent a significant amount of professional time developing deep understandings of the ELA and math Common Core shifts and made significant changes to curriculum to align teaching practices. As PARCC sample items have been released, teachers have revisited standards and domains to continue to build their understanding of appropriate levels of rigor.

From 2013 to 2015 NHCS teachers attended Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) courses to earn Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsement. At each grade level, teachers have led professional development for their teams to share best practices learned in their courses. We have set aside time for teachers to align curriculum to the WIDA standards and have adapted our materials accordingly, including by adding a detailed tiered vocabulary section to all scope and sequence documents.

*Describe the process used to develop horizontally and vertically aligned curriculum for the new grade span and a timeline for curriculum development and implementation, if applicable, including the individuals involved.*

The DCI will lead the curriculum design process in conjunction with the high school principal. Our intention is to hire the principal for the start of the 2016-17 school year, one year prior to having our first 9th grade class. The DCI and the principal will evaluate high school curriculums from high performing schools and utilize the considerable knowledge base of a committee of advisors with extensive high school expertise in order to develop NHCS’ MassCore aligned scope and sequence. This process will be completed during the 2016-17 school year. Teachers for each expansion grade will work over the summer prior to the addition of that grade in order to develop materials for their courses. By design, our first 9th grade class will be smaller than subsequent classes, and will remain so through 12th grade. This will give teachers a slightly lighter teaching load as we expand into each new grade level, allowing for additional time to work on curriculum development.

A continuous strand in our weekly professional time with K-8 staff is set aside for grade level and department meetings. This professional time will be a component of the high school model as well. In the first year of each new grade level, teachers will meet as a group for grade level meetings facilitated by the high school principal. These meetings will focus on academic expectations, procedures such as start-of-class routines and organizational systems, and universal NHCS Best Practices for Instruction and Behavior Management (see Appendix A). During the first year of the high school expansion in 2017-18, 9th grade teachers will also meet regularly with their middle school colleagues for department meetings in order to ensure a smooth vertical alignment with our 7th and 8th grade program. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, when the school will include 9th and 10th grades, we will launch high school department-level meetings.

*Describe the process and procedures used to evaluate whether curriculum and instruction is effective and successfully implemented. Include in your response a brief summary of the assessment system implemented at the school, and any modifications if request is granted.*

Neighborhood House uses frequent teacher observation, measures of student engagement, and student assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction. We value the power of formative assessments in informing teachers’ practice and identifying student struggles, and also want to maximize instructional time and therefore do not want our students spending excessive amounts of time testing. The goal of our assessment program is to provide teachers with actionable information about their own teaching as well as areas of student strength and weakness in an efficient and timely manner. In addition to state assessments and those developed by ANet, we currently use an array of tools to evaluate the efficacy of curriculum and instruction. We decide what we want to measure and then look for assessments that measure these skills and competencies. If we do not find standardized assessments that are a good fit, we develop our own. We also continually revisit assessments for usefulness. For example, in the early grades we use a combination of standardized and internally developed assessments to measure literacy. Teachers administer Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments, the Peabody Picture and Vocabulary test to measure receptive vocabulary, a sight word assessment based on the DOLCH lists, and an internally developed pre-reading and phonics assessment. Teachers use this constellation of data to design the most effective instructional program for each student that utilizes their strengths to mitigate their weaknesses. Teachers in all grade levels and subjects use observational assessments, do-nows, exit tickets, quizzes, tests, and rubric scored projects and presentations to assess student learning. Students in grades 6-8 take final exams in their four core subjects.

Neighborhood House also utilizes student assessment data to determine the social/emotional strengths and challenges of our students. In partnership with the Program for Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency (PEAR) from McLean Hospital, we give all students in grades 5-8 a Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) twice yearly. The results of the HSA inform teachers and the Student Support Team in the delivery of social/emotional learning groups and other support programs.

With an expansion to grades 9-12, Neighborhood House would continue to use assessment tools to measure the growth and development of our students’ academic skills as well as their social/emotional well-being. For academic assessments, we will continue to seek out or internally develop assessment tools for both formative and summative assessments of our students’ growth. The HSA tool is currently used by other high schools and we will use it at the high school level as well.

*Provide an outline of the curriculum scope and sequence that will be used in the new grade levels, including the content and skills to be taught in the core content areas at each new grade level, if applicable.*

Neighborhood House intends to follow MassCore with all students completing a minimum of four years of English, four years of math, three years of lab-based science, three years of history, two years of the same foreign language, one year of arts, and five additional core classes.

**English:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Course Options |
| 9 | Literary Analysis and Composition |
| 10 | British and World Literature |
| 11 | American Literature/ English Foundations |
| 12 | Journalism/AP English Language and Composition/ Creative Writing and Literature |

NHCS high school English courses will focus on text based reading and writing aligned to the standards put forth in the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Framework. Students will implement close reading and critical analysis of texts as they read short stories, poetry, novels, autobiographies, essays, and famous speeches. Students will broaden their composition skills through the study of model essays and effective implementation of the writing process with a focus on topic development and organization as well as sentence structure and grammatical mechanics. All courses will work to prepare students with the reading and writing skills necessary for college and career. 9th grade instruction will reinforce the academic skills necessary to be a critical reader, writer, and thinker. In 10th grade students will read texts from around the world. Potential titles include: *Things Fall Apart, Kite Runner, In the Time of the Butterflies, The Bookseller of Kabul, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, A Long Way Gone, The Little Prince,* and works from Shakespeare. Potential titles for American Literature in the 11th grade are: *The Great Gatsby, Catcher in the Rye, The Scarlet Letter, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Native Son, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *A Lesson Before Dying*. English Foundations, a remedial course, will be available for students unable to access the grade level curriculum. In 12th grade students will be able to select half or full year courses. In Journalism students will learn about the historical importance of journalism, as well as the craft of research and journalistic writing. Creative Writing will focus on student development of original short stories, essays, plays, and poetry using examples from classic literature as models. AP English Language and Composition will be a year-long course geared toward success on the advanced placement exam.

**Mathematics:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Course Options |
| 9 | Algebra I |
| 10 | Geometry |
| 11 | Algebra II/ Math Foundations I |
| 12 | Math Foundations II/ Precalculus/ Calculus/ AP Statistics |

NHCS high school math courses will follow the Model Traditional Pathway as outlined in the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Framework. 9th grade instruction will focus on linear, exponential, and quadratic functions. In 10th grade, students will deepen their understanding of geometric relationships with a focus on congruence and similarity and the development of geometric proofs. Most 11th graders will build on their earlier work in Algebra while learning about logarithmic, polynomial, rational, and radical functions. A Math Foundations I course will be available for entering 11th graders who struggle to access the grade level curriculum. 12th graders will have the option to take a range of courses to fulfill their math requirement, including Foundations II, Precalculus, Calculus, or AP Statistics. The Standards for Mathematical Practice will be embedded into math instruction throughout all of the courses and students will be encouraged to reflect on the interconnectedness across various mathematical ideas.

**Science:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Course Options |
| 9 | Physics |
| 10 | Biology |
| 11 | Chemistry |
| 12 | Technology and Engineering/ AP Chemistry/ Earth and Space Science |

The proposed courses above reflect our current thinking regarding a sequence for high school science based on the most recent draft of the Revised Science and Technology/Engineering Standards, but we recognize that the state may make changes to this framework prior to its final adoption. We have begun to incorporate the Next Generation Science Standards and cross-cutting concepts throughout our K-8 program and look forward to clearer expectations from the state to inform our high school scope and sequence development. In 9th grade, students will study conceptual physics with an emphasis on hands-on experiences of energy, forces and interactions. They will also study the application of waves as a technology for information transfer. 10th graders will study biology with an emphasis on molecules, organisms, ecosystems, heredity, and evolution. 11th graders will take chemistry, studying matter with a focus on the periodic table, energy transfers during chemical reactions, and molecular structures and their properties. Finally, 12th graders will have a choice of three courses: Technology and Engineering, AP Chemistry, or Earth and Space Science. Throughout, there will be a focus on the Scientific and Engineering Practices and on cross-cutting concepts.

**History**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Course Options |
| 9 | World History I |
| 10 | World History II |
| 11 | US History II |
| 12 | AP Microeconomics/ AP Psychology/ Geography |

Building off their 8th grade experience with US History, NHCS high school students will follow Pathway 3 from the Massachusetts History and Social Studies Curriculum Framework. In 9th grade, the curriculum will focus on world civilizations after the fall of the Roman Empire through the enlightenment era in Europe. 10th grade students will study the development of the nation state in Europe through the present. In 11th grade, students’ focus will return to US history, from the Reconstruction era to the present day. In 12th grade, students will be able to opt for an elective course. In all grades, our curriculum is guided by the Inquiry Arc from the C3 framework for Social Studies. This framework is grounded in the belief that students need to (1) recognize societal problems; (2) ask good questions and develop robust investigations into them; (3) consider possible solutions and consequences; (4) separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions; and (5) communicate and act upon what they learn.

**Foreign Language:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Course Options |
| 9 | Spanish\* I |
| 10 | Spanish\* II |
| 11 | Spanish\* III |
| 12 | Optional Spanish IV/ AP Spanish Language and Culture |

\*Spanish is listed here as a placeholder. Our intention is to use information from various stakeholders (including middle school students and their families) during our planning year to determine which foreign language(s) will be offered at Neighborhood House. Potential offerings include Spanish, French, Mandarin, Arabic and/or Latin. Teachers at all levels will integrate the study of culture into their courses. Students will take a minimum of three years of the same foreign language and will develop increasing competency in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. An optional fourth year as well as an advanced placement course will be available.

**College and Career Readiness (CCR):**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Course Options |
| 9 | “Who Am I?” |
| 10 | “What Do I Want?” |
| 11 | “How Do I Get There?” |
| 12 | “How Do I Transition and Succeed?” |

NHCS students will build off of a CCR course they take in middle school with a four-year high school sequence preparing them for success in post-secondary education and in life. Each year will focus on a particular theme. In 9th grade, students will turn a lens on themselves, reflecting on the question “Who Am I?” Through a series of exercises, they will focus on their strengths and challenges, developing a better understanding of their unique profile. In 10th grade, students will look to the future, imagining many potential possibilities and answering the question “What Do I Want?” With this evolving sense of direction, 11th graders will explore “How Do I Get There?” researching the various post-secondary programs which might be a good match given their interests and abilities. Finally, in 12th grade, “How Do I Transition and Succeed?” will focus on the key strategies that will enable them to prosper as they move on to life after Neighborhood House. An additional component of the CCR program is the Extended Learning Opportunities through which 11th and 12th graders will participate in internships, online courses, independent study projects, or enroll in college classes.

*Briefly describe the supports provided to meet the academic needs of all students, including but not limited to students with disabilities, and English language learners. Indicate how the strategies may need to evolve during implementation of the proposed expansion.*

Neighborhood House is a full-inclusion school, serving students with a wide range of abilities. Our model includes a student-to-teacher ratio of 11:1 allowing us significant ability to support all learners. Flexible small group instruction allows teachers to group students in ways that maximize learning for all. A myriad of supports such as scheduled math and literacy intervention during the day and afterschool homework support provide needed support for struggling students. A dedicated special education teacher or special education fellow in all grades 1-8, a full-time occupational therapist, a full-time school psychologist, and full-time speech language pathologist all provide both push-in and pull-out supports for students. This talented special education team works with general education teachers, students, and families to craft IEPs that are unique to each student and take careful consideration of strengths, struggles, successful past interventions, and areas of growth. One hundred percent of our classroom teachers serving English Language Learners and 73% of our overall classroom teaching staff are either SEI endorsed or are pursuing their ESL licensure.

The successful support model of NHCS’s K-8 program will be continued through our high school program. We will have a robust staffing model with a student-to-teacher ratio of 9:1 at the high school level and use creative scheduling to allow for two adults in the classroom for a majority of instructional time. NHCS has always backfilled through our highest grades and in doing so has brought in students of all abilities and needs. To support new students who are significantly behind we have developed creative programming such as Scholar Academy, which takes place during the first week of school, enrichment cycles targeted to support new students, peer mentoring, and afterschool support. As we enroll new students through the 11th grade we recognize that academic gaps for some students will be even more significant. We will develop more supports to enable these students to be academically successful, which may include a late summer academy to prepare students for the start of school, a differentiated length of school day, and, when necessary, a separate strand of coursework for students who are unable to be successful in the grade level classroom even with support.

# Culture and Family Engagement

*Briefly describe the strategies used to create a safe school environment, and to address the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of your students. Indicate how the strategies may need to evolve during implementation of the proposed expansion.*

*Safe School Environment*NHCS has successfully created a positive learning environment that is both emotionally and physically safe. This culture is very evident to all who enter the school. Visitors frequently comment on how calm and pleasant the school is and how happy children and adults appear. It is also clear that our students have been taught responsibility, and that they are ready and eager to learn.  On recent surveys, 85% of surveyed students and 98% of parents indicated that they consider Neighborhood House to be a safe environment. Our culture and systems were tested in 2013 when the Boston marathon bombing led to the death of one of our students as well as severe injuries to another student. This tragedy required a rapid response from our school leaders and Student Support Team to meet the needs of traumatized students, staff, and families. We were recognized and praised by some of the nation’s leaders in trauma response for our ability to stabilize the entire school community and minimize further exposure and disruption. Robert Macy, Ph.D., the Founder and Director of International Trauma Center, remarked that NHCS employed “brilliant instincts” in the handling of the marathon bombing tragedy as well as the handling of the anniversary of the tragedy one year later. Dr. Macy explained that incidents of this magnitude often expose the cracks and inconsistencies in systems and leadership at institutions. He credited Neighborhood House’s strong systems of communication and student support for the capacity to respond so effectively.

The key elements of effective student support systems, clear safety rules and expectations, and strong student-to-staff and peer-to-peer relationships will continue into the NHCS high school to support the same culture and safe learning environment that currently exists.

*Social/Emotional Support*At its full proposed enrollment, Neighborhood House will continue to be what it is today: a small school with a low student-to-teacher ratio that strives to build meaningful connections among students and teachers as well as among peers. The NHCS high school will continue to emphasize the importance of social/emotional competence in achieving success in school and in life. We will demonstrate our commitment to prioritizing high levels of social/emotional support by:

* Implementing active, participatory and engaging instructional methods for teaching SEL skills to students
* Assuring that all teaching and support personnel have initial and ongoing professional development and support for implementing programming and responding to students’ needs
* Continuously developing and evaluating practices and protocols to ensure alignment with our philosophy of social/emotional support

In the high school, student support will follow the same model as has been successful in the K-8 program. It will be led by a Student Support Team with members focused solely on the high school population. All teachers will be trained in how to bring student support into the classroom. Coaches, advisors, and extracurricular staff will receive additional training as small group facilitators to be able to foster student resiliency, independence, and peer-to-peer support. All staff members will contribute to an environment where students feel part of a caring community and learn skills to express themselves and their struggles in a productive manner.

Recognizing that high school students have different social/emotional needs than younger students, NHCS will adapt its established and successful program in a developmentally appropriate way, incorporating both learning and supportive action. We will continue to intentionally foster a supportive and inclusive peer community while creating opportunities for student leadership, voice, and agency. There will be an emphasis on building strong relationships with adults, and developmentally appropriate social/emotional skill-building embedded throughout the school day.  When issues arise, the Student Support Team will work closely with advisors, teachers, and families to ensure that individual students get the social/emotional support they need. A mentoring program, whether run in-house or through a community partner, will also be available to specific high school students who could most benefit.

*Physical Health and Wellness*NHCS is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children’s health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Our full-time school nurse is an integral part of our Student Support Team, with a deep understanding of students’ physical well-being and family challenges. In addition to being onsite each day to administer medications and deal with health challenges as they arise, she arranges for yearly vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings to ensure that physical challenges are addressed, and also teaches a sexual education curriculum to 6th graders.

In the high school, NHCS will continue to promote physical health and wellness. Nutritious meals and snacks will be offered to promote healthy eating, and all students will complete the MassCore requirements in Physical Activity and Fitness, Nutrition, and Reproduction/Sexuality. Students will be able to fulfill their physical activity requirement through gym class, certain electives, or by participating on a sports team.

*School Behavior System*NHCS’s philosophy of discipline is proactive. Our system of social/emotional supports enables us to prevent and constructively address behavioral issues while fostering in students the ability to self-regulate and avoid disruptive behaviors. The system also allows for reflection, restitution, and growth when students are not meeting behavioral expectations. Suspension is used only when all other means have been exhausted and is primarily in-school.

NHCS has developed a discipline system that is well-understood by students and families and consistently implemented by staff. The system is grounded in our school values and rules (see table below) that are displayed in every classroom and integrated into lessons and discussions.

|  |
| --- |
| School values |
| Seek knowledge  Embrace effort  Act thoughtfully  Commit to the common good |
| School rules |
| Make good choices  Make things better not worse  Respect yourself, others, and the community |

As with the K-8 program, we will strive for clarity and consistency with respect to behavior expectations at the high school level. The majority of students entering our 9th grade will have spent at least some previous time as NHCS students and will have internalized our positive culture and behavior expectations. We will continue to emphasize these at the high school level, using positive reinforcement such as public recognition and earned privileges as much as possible to encourage good choices.

*Briefly describe how the school develops strong working relationships with families/guardians in order to support students’ academic progress and social and emotional well-being. Indicate how the strategies may need to evolve during implementation of the proposed expansion.*

NHCS strives to involve parents as full partners in their children’s education. Decades of research show that when parents are involved, students have higher grades, better attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, and decreased use of drugs and alcohol. We go to great lengths to celebrate the individual culture and background of each student’s family beginning with a school-wide, multi-disciplinary “Identity” unit in September each year. Photos, maps, and posters from this unit remain displayed throughout the year to help families feel at home and welcome in our school.

Parents are engaged in their children’s learning through regular telephone calls from their child’s advisor, twice-yearly goal-setting meetings with their child’s teachers, frequent personalized communication about their child’s strengths and challenges, and opportunities to attend grade-level and whole-school events including the K1 Tall Tales Museum, 1st Grade Muffins with Mom, the Lower School Math Night, Arts Solstice, and weekly Town Meeting. Parents are also invited to participate in Parent Council, which meets five times a year to plan fundraising and family events.

Family engagement at the high school level will be similarly premised on clear communication and ample opportunities to participate in school activities and events. The frequency of communication with parents about students’ progress will decrease as students develop their ability to self-advocate and take responsibility for their academic progress and behavior. We will focus our efforts on investing parents in helping their children make decisions about their futures. For example, we will offer a series of workshops for parents on topics such as the college application process, financial aid and paying for college, post-secondary options other than college, and how to establish a culture at home that supports ambitious goals around college and career.

# Capacity

*Describe how the staff will implement the request effectively and evaluate its success. Indicate the individuals involved throughout the process of implementation, and the systems in place for decision-making and communication among all members of the school community.*

NHCS’ Management Team will oversee effective implementation of this request and, along with the Board, evaluate its success. The team will leverage its experience with a previous expansion: Beginning in 2004-05 the school doubled in size from 200 to 400 students, bringing on approximately 20 new teachers and staff and buying and renovating a new facility. The team will put into place an advisory council consisting of educators with significant experience founding or running high schools that share characteristics of our planned high school. Individuals across the school and community will be involved throughout the implementation process, with particular responsibility vested in the Executive Director, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the Director of Strategic Projects, the Chief Financial Officer, and a new High School Principal. At the Board level, the Expansion Committee, Finance Committee, Real Estate Committee, and Development Committee will be tasked with oversight of various aspects of expansion. The Executive Director and Board Chair will coordinate these individuals and groups to ensure appropriate levels of communication and alignment.

To guide implementation and support sound decision-making, we will develop a detailed work plan, based on the higher level action plan below, that will include all milestones, deliverables, and key decision-points; point person/s; and target dates. This work plan will serve as a comprehensive road map for expansion. The major work streams of the work plan will be:

* Program: program and curriculum development; staffing and hiring; student recruitment
* Real Estate: needs assessment; exploring options (build versus lease versus buy); securing and readying space
* Finance: budget management and oversight
* Development: Fundraising campaign planning and oversight

To evaluate whether we are successfully implementing expansion, we will look to the degree to which we are able to meet the milestones and deliverables detailed in the expansion work plan on a timely basis. Both the Management Team and the Expansion Committee will meet regularly to monitor progress and address challenges as they arise. The Real Estate, Finance, and Development Committees will also meet regularly to monitor progress of their respective work streams. The Expansion, Real Estate, Finance, and Development Committees will report to the Board at each of its five regularly scheduled meetings.

We will also look to our Department-approved accountability plan to evaluate success in implementing this request. In that plan, we report annually on a number of measures across all grades, including enrollment, retention, academic success, social/emotional health, student engagement, and educator excellence. Meeting the goals of the accountability plan across all grades, and especially the expansion grades, will be a key indicator of our success.

*Provide an action plan for implementation. Describe the proposed strategies that will lead to a successful implementation of the proposed changes. Include: a timeline, action(s) to be taken, designated point person, and start date and projected completion date.*

NHCS has carefully considered the steps that we will need to take in order to successfully open a high school and expand laterally in grades 3-8. Below is a table illustrating the action plan for implementation of this amendment request. Our strategies in creating this plan were threefold: 1) to develop and deploy our collective strengths, 2) to maintain an effective human capital strategy, and 3) to leave room for continuous improvement of the model and process.

As the plan unfolds, key decisions may result in additional steps or alternate avenues for action. A certain amount of discretion will also be given to a newly hired high school principal to affect the design of the school. Those uncertainties aside, the plan below reflects our most current thinking on the implementation process.

| Action | Point Person | Start Date | Completion Date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Convene Advisory Council | Executive Director | Aug 2015 | Oct 2015 |
| Complete campus master planning | Chief Financial Officer | Aug 2015 | Dec 2015 |
| Continue to build high school program model | Executive Director | Oct 2015 | Feb 2016 |
| Oversee expanded enrollment process | Director of Operations | Jan 2016 | Mar 2016 |
| Reconfigure space on current campus to accommodate lateral expansion | Chief Financial Officer | Feb 2016 | Aug 2016 |
| Decide scope of capital project | Board of Trustees | Mar 2016 | Mar 2016 |
| Conduct search for high school principal | Executive Director | Feb 2016 | June 2016 |
| Hire and onboard new teachers for middle school expansion | Middle School Principal | May 2016 | Aug 2016 |
| Support high school principal with continued program development | Executive Director | Aug 2016 | June 2017 |
| Final acquisition of space for first years of high school | Executive Director | Jan 2017 | Aug 2017 |
| Acquire/develop high school curriculum | High School Principal and Director of Curriculum and Instruction | Feb 2017 | July 2017 |
| Hire new teachers based on staffing model (below) | High School Principal and Middle School Principal | May 2017 | July 2017 |
| Teachers adapt curriculum in preparation for first year of 9th grade | High School Teachers and Director of Curriculum and Instruction | July 2017 | August 2017 |
| Hire other staff based on staffing model (below) | Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer | August 2017 | November 2017 |

*Provide a complete staffing chart and detailed narrative staffing plan to support the planning and implementation of the proposed increase in enrollment and/or grade span.*

The Management Team has carefully considered how to adjust the staffing plan of the school over time in order to accommodate the increased grade span and enrollment. Appendix D contains detailed charts illustrating the draft staffing model for the middle and high schools. Below is a narrative describing the primary elements of the staffing plan.

**Middle school.** In FY17, the first year that the 5th and 6th grades will both contain an additional section, we plan to hire five additional educators: a science teacher, a social studies teacher, a special education teacher, an arts specialist, and a teaching fellow. In the subsequent year, we will add one more science teacher, another teaching fellow, and a social studies/SPED teacher, resulting in 8 additional instructional staff by the time the middle school is at capacity.

**High school.**  We plan to hire a principal for the high school one year in advance of its opening who will help implement the high school staffing plan. Our current plan envisions 48.5 FTE (full-time equivalents) for the high school as follows:

* **Teachers.** The first class of 9th graders will begin in FY18. In that year, we will have hired five full-time teachers and three part-time teachers in arts, physical education, and ELL (which will grow to full-time over two years). These teachers will begin curriculum planning in the summer leading up the school year. In the subsequent year, when the first 10th graders begin, the arts and physical education positions will become full-time positions and we will also add five full-time teachers and one part-time technology teacher. The following year, with the addition of the 11th grade class, the part-time technology position will become a full-time position and we will hire seven additional full-time teachers: five in core academic areas and two support teachers for high needs students, of whom we are prepared to enroll a greater number through backfilling. Finally, in the year of the first 12th grade (FY21), we will add four full-time academic teachers and one full-time physical education teacher.
* **Other.** In the first year of the high school we will hire a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction and a Special Education Director. That year will also see two additional Special Education staff positions, which will grow year by year into eight full-time positions, and the hire of a part-time facilities person and part-time nurse. The following year, several more key positions will be added: a full-time operations position, a Dean of Discipline, and a College & Career Readiness Counselor. We will also add a psychologist, an office manager, a cafeteria staff person, and a business manager. In the next year, when the first 11th graders start, we will add a part-time building level substitute teacher and an internship/vocational coordinator. Finally, by the time the first 12th graders start, all of the above positions will have become full-time (except for the business manager), and we will add a second College & Career Readiness Counselor.

*If the school contracts with an EMO, describe how the EMO will support the planning and implementation of the proposed amendment.*

NHCS does not and will not be contracting with an EMO.

# Governance

*Schools may choose to summarize briefly within their request board activities that demonstrate effective governance, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and examples of corrective action in response to identified challenges. The summary may include specific achievements over the most recent charter term; analyses of stakeholder satisfaction surveys; board and school leadership evaluations; board of trustees’ self-evaluation; and strategic planning. The summary should provide additional context to any recent circumstances in the school’s history involving these areas of the school’s performance, including charter conditions, probation, recent amendments, performance against CSPC as reported in site visit reports, or charter renewal.*

NHCS benefits greatly from the depth and breadth of backgrounds and expertise reflected on our Board. The Board consists of several committees including Executive, Finance & Audit, Governance & Nominating, Real Estate, Development, Academic, and, most relevant to this amendment request, Expansion. Board committees set annual goals and follow an annual committee agenda. These tools help to ensure that 1) committee level oversight is aligned to the goals of the strategic plan and other key performance goals, 2) the committees and school leadership are working in concert in their respective roles to ensure the success and sustainability of the school, and 3) committee work and decision-making is well-executed and transparent. All Board and committee meetings are held in compliance with the Open Meeting Law and Public Records Law. All Board members comply with the requirements of State Ethics laws and file annual financial disclosures with the relevant government agencies.

Board-level achievements over the recent charter term include:

* Completing a new five-year strategic plan in FY14 that set clear goals for the future in five areas: 1) program development and alignment; 2) long-term financial sustainability; 3) dissemination and leadership in the field; 4) governance and school leadership; and 5) expansion planning. Progress is monitored at the Board and committee levels, facilitated by a dashboard tool that highlights accomplishments and challenges and summarizes work-in-progress. (See Appendix E for an example of the strategic plan dashboard report.)
* Conducting a successful search for a new school leader, resulting in the hiring of Kate Scott as Executive Director in the spring of 2014. Kate, a long-time teacher and administrator at the school, served as Interim Head of School during the 2013-14 school year.
* Overseeing a smooth transition from founding Headmaster Kevin Andrews to Executive Director Kate Scott.
* Implementing a new process for Board self-evaluation and implementing a new evaluation system for the Executive Director.

*Describe how the board of trustees will implement the request effectively and evaluate its success. Provide details of the board’s role in planning, and monitoring progress of the expansion.*

Please see the Capacity section above.

*Provide approved board minutes for the twelve months prior to the submission of this amendment request on August 1. (If the school has submitted any of the requested board minutes previously to the Department, please submit only the minutes that have not yet been collected by the Department.)*

See Appendix F for approved Board meeting minutes from the last twelve months that have not already been submitted to the Department.

# Finance

*Schools may choose to summarize briefly within their request board activities that demonstrate effective financial management, as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The summary may include information regarding real estate acquisition, loan agreements and debt repayment, and fundraising, as applicable. The summary should provide additional context to any recent circumstances in the school’s history involving these areas of the school’s performance.*

There are several layers of Board oversight at NHCS to ensure the highest level of financial stewardship. The NHCS Finance Committee is composed of seven members with experience in investment management, real estate financing, and non-profit leadership. The Committee meets a minimum of three times a year to focus solely on the school’s financials. A typical agenda includes in-depth reviews of operating results and five-year projections, the school’s ability to meet its debt obligations and debt covenant agreements, and the long-term financial goals of the school. The Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee each meet five times per year; a full financial report of annual financial results, projections, and capital expenditures is delivered by the Finance Committee Chair or the Chief Financial Officer at each meeting.

During FY15, the Finance Committee was heavily involved in the refinancing of the remaining mortgage on the building that the NHCS Foundation owns in Dorchester. The refinancing effort is indicative of the level of engagement of the Finance Committee. It involved a six-month process consisting of the review of numerous bank term sheets, several meetings with bank representatives and committee meetings to select the bank that best met all of our needs. The final result of this collaborative effort by management and the Finance Committee is a debt structure with a low interest rate for a ten-year term and debt covenants that will allow NHCS maximum flexibility to manage its operations. Relative to the proposed expansion of NHCS, this banking relationship also allows for additional financing should the school be approved for expansion and the Foundation need to seek additional space.

In FY14, to assure the long-term financial sustainability of NHCS, the Finance Committee approved a financial strategic plan that was also approved by the full Board of Trustees. This plan incorporates three prongs – a new staff compensation system, a restructured organization chart, and increased revenue.

The full Board of Trustees, along with the development staff of the school, is responsible for the successful fundraising each year of approximately $1 million. This amount is built into the school’s budget and progress toward the goal is discussed at each Board meeting. For the past several years, and going forward for the next five years, a portion of this fundraising goal is intended to create a cash surplus to be used towards the school’s expansion.

*The Department will review the school’s financial history, including the* [*Financial Dashboard*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/dashboard/) *at* [*http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/dashboard/*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/dashboard/)*, as part of the amendment request. Schools should explain any unique circumstances related to published school data, and corrective actions taken to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance within their request.*

The School’s CFO and Finance Committee use the Department’s Financial Dashboard to monitor NHCS’ financial health and to benchmark key metrics against state averages. From FY10 to FY13 there was an area of concern, as indicated in red on the dashboard, around the percentage of program paid by tuition. NHCS’ average was 73% against a state-wide average of 89%. During that time frame, NHCS had the benefit of successful fundraising through its Foundation, which resulted in an average gift from the Foundation to the school between FY10 and FY13 of $550,000. This allowed the school to incur programmatic expenses to support increased spending in the areas of student support services. Also, the school was attempting to improve teacher compensation while also maintaining a robust staffing model.

In FY12, there was also an area of high risk with a 7.7% decrease in net assets. This was due to the decrease in the school’s per-pupil reimbursement of $5,304,400 which was over $200,000 less than the Department’s FY12 projected amount of $5,516,000. Also, the rent expense of the school to the Foundation in FY12 was unusually high due to the settlement of a debt by the Foundation relative to the original debt structure in the purchase of the school building. By definition, the rent expense of the school includes all financing costs incurred by the Foundation, including principal and interest.

The FY14 high risk indicator relative to unrestricted day’s cash was solely due to the late payment of the fourth quarter per-pupil reimbursement of $1,446,633 which materially impacted the June 30, 2014 ratio.

In both FY14 and FY15, the school experienced strong fiscal health, creating operating cash surpluses in each year and well exceeding its bank covenants. We believe that expansion will contribute to our long-term financial sustainability. The larger size of the expanded student population will create significant economies of scale on a per-pupil basis (e.g., many fixed administrative salary costs will be spread across a larger number of students).

*Describe the financial resources that are necessary to implement the school’s expansion, including the projected sources of revenue that will ensure the fiscal viability of the school and the successful implementation of the proposed change(s). Describe contingency planning for potential challenges in cash flow or budget shortfalls due to lower than anticipated student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of expansion, include specific strategies.*

The Management Team and Board of Trustees are currently working with a master planner to evaluate options on the current campus to most effectively accommodate additional students. Among other things, this planning exercise will look at building an addition that would add six new classrooms. Preliminary estimates indicate that a capital project of this nature would cost approximately $3 million. Our financial model for expansion indicates that ramp-up costs to get the high school to scale will be approximately $1.3 million. Therefore, the combined cost of the capital project and high school start-up is $4.3 million. There are several funding options currently being considered:

* Launching a capital campaign (a capital campaign in 2003-04 raised $3.7 million and preliminary research indicates that we could surpass that benchmark in a second campaign)
* Directing up to $1.5 million of NHCS current cash reserves towards the expansion
* Seeking grant support from foundations known for supporting new high schools (we have identified a potential $0.8 million-$2.25 million in foundation funding towards high school start-up costs)
* Additional financing through drawing on an existing $500,000 line of credit, or by assuming additional mortgage debt up to $5 million that is allowable in the current debt structure with our bank provided NHCS meets debt service coverage and underwriting requirements at the time of execution

If this amendment request is approved, the Board of Trustees will make a decision about which combination of these options to pursue.

Should our projections generate less revenue or should we incur higher construction or high school start-up costs than anticipated, we believe that our cash reserves, line of credit, and ability to fundraise will allow us to continue with the expansion until the financial model becomes self-sustaining.

*Provide financial projections performed in planning for the proposed expansion. Financial projections should reflect both immediate and long-term considerations that the board and school leadership have identified in implementation of the proposed amendment. Provide a detailed narrative explaining the financial forecasts, and the underlying assumptions.*

Please see Appendix G for our financial projections.

*Describe the facility that will be used to meet the school’s needs and how it is accessible to individuals with physical disabilities and able to accommodate all students, and if modifications will be required. Indicate if the current facility will accommodate the expansion, or if additional space and/or renovations will be required.*

If we are granted seats, our facility needs will shift as we increase enrollment towards full enrollment in 2021, as indicated in the chart below:

| Year | Area of Expansion | Facility Arrangements |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2016-17 | Middle School: increased enrollment | Students in Queen Street facility, current space redesigned as indicated in master planning process |
| 2017-18 | Middle School: increased enrollment  High School: 9th Grade | 7th, 8th, and 9th grades in rented space; new classroom wing under construction at Queen Street facility |
| 2018-19 | Middle School: Increased Enrollment  High School: grows to include 10th grade | K-8, including expanded middle school, in Queen Street facility; new classroom wing finished; high school in rented space |
| 2019-20 | K-8 at full enrollment; High School nears full enrollment | K-8 in Queen Street facility; new classroom wing finished; high school in rented space; Management works with consultant to identify permanent space for the high school |

To permanently accommodate 120 new students in grades 3-8 we will need a new classroom wing that would add six additional classrooms. We are also studying the feasibility of building a Performance, Athletics and Community Center. A recently undertaken master planning process will explore how best we can meet these needs. It will also help us determine whether we can temporarily house additional students in repurposed space in our current building or whether we will need to install modular classrooms on site for the 2016-17 school year.

Until 2021-22, we will house the high school in leased space. This will give us time to determine the long-term facility needs of the high school. We have built into the budget funding to renovate the leased space to fit our technology, classroom, and shared-space needs. Our preliminary criteria for the leased space are:

* Approximately 35,000 square feet for our leased facility (115 square feet per pupil at capacity)
* Proximate to current space so that administrative and other functions can be easily shared and to allow for the possibility of sharing gym and performance space

As soon as we learn whether this amendment request has been approved, our Board level Real Estate Committee will immediately begin to explore leased facility options for the high school.

*Describe how transportation services are provided to all eligible students, and if modifications will be required. Please note: charter schools must notify the district(s) providing transportation no later than February 1st prior to the start of the school year of all transportation needs, including any changes resulting from the granting of an amendment.*

Consistent with state laws, Neighborhood House will ensure all students eligible under BPS’s transportation plan, including physically challenged students, are provided transportation to and from school. Transportation for high school students will be provided by the MBTA (public transportation). Those students living beyond 1.5 miles from campus will be provided free MBTA passes. Those living within 1.5 miles will be expected to walk or purchase their own passes.

Physically challenged students will be transported by an external private transportation vendor, as indicated in their IEP or 504 plan. Transportation will not impede a student’s access to a full school day and program of instruction.

# APPENDICES

*Appendices were altered for length. The original appendices included the following sections which are available upon request:*

* *Draft Enrollment Policy and Enrollment Application*
* *Example of Strategic Plan Dashboard Report*
* *Approved Board Minutes of November 2014, January 2015, and April 2015*

## Appendix A – NHCS’s Best Practices for Instruction and Behavior Management

**NHCS Best Practices for Instruction**

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| --- |
| **MINDSET** |
| * Love your subject, be excited about it and make kids feel the same * Structure classes so that kids love school and love learning * Believe and message that every child can learn * Believe and message that effort and a growth mindset are the key to life success * Continually hold high expectations * Continually demonstrate that you care about your students and their futures- ALL of them * Provide opportunities for academic struggle |

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| **While you are observing in a classroom-**make the most of your time |
| * Check walls for- student work, vocabulary, rules, values, content- are walls effective means of supporting content? * Is the seating arrangement effective * US-Check student work files, additional handouts, etc * Look at student binders/folders for   + Assigned work (quantity/quality) connection to classwork   + Graded work (quantity/quality)   + Use of note taking docs etc |

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| **INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS** |
| Priority 1 |
| * Set clear and specific aim * Maintain efficient transitions (including brightening the lines) * Maintain appropriate pacing for time and task * LS- established beginning and end of day routines- clear daily schedule * LS- mini lesson followed by independent or small group work * US- Use beginning and end of class routines (including recording homework completion) * US- Use BBC format * US- Have clear expectations for how students   + Turn in homework   + Get missing assignments   + Turn in revisions   + Organize binders and material   + Use headings |
| Priority 2 |
| * When helpful, use exit tickets to capture learning |

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| **TEACHER LED INSTRUCTION** |
| Priority 1 |
| * Push work on learning on students- they do the heavy lifting, not teachers * Activate prior knowledge * Set purpose for learning (teacher or student) Zoom in and out * Connect to real world applications whenever possible * Be clear about what the expectations for students are (write, follow along, correct mistakes, take notes, etc) * US-If you write it they write it (note taking, answers, etc) *have the same page on your smartboard that they have in front of them* * Involve students in problem solving – have students do the thinking * Be intentional about scaffolding (pull back whenever possible) * Pursue both correct and incorrect answers- ask why * Use turn and talk * Be aware of ratio of teacher talk v student talk * Use smartboard effectively to support instruction * When reading use CTG and AIR with a pre-planned text * Speak in professional English and expect students too as well |
| Priority 2 |
| * Use hooks and build anticipation * Use models and exemplars * Use think-alouds to demonstrate thinking * Provide opportunities for access through multiple modalities * Give students the right number of reps (not too few, not too many) |

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| **QUESTIONING** |
| Priority 1 |
| * Push work on learning on students- they do the heavy lifting, not teachers * Have questions and exemplar answers prepared before class starts * Cold call * No opt out * Pursue both correct and incorrect answers-   + Neutral responses to right and wrong answers   + Ask for evidence and support of right and wrong answers * Don’t call on high achieving kids first * Use whole class call and response to emphasize important content or vocabulary * Don’t ever ask “any questions?” “does this make sense?” “everybody get it?” or other open ended question of this type   + If directions are confusing or unclear have a student repeat what they are being asked to do * Curtail student ramblings and tangents and maintain pacing * Break answers into parts so multiple kids answer – what is the q, what is the first step, second step… * Effective wait time   + Pause   + Have all students write answers/thoughts before answering aloud/discussion * Intentionally place students names when calling on them   + Question/name   + Question/wait time/name   + Name/Question (accommodation) * Use class closure question to solidify/demonstrate mastery of aim |
| Priority 2 |
| * Create a classroom environment where students see wrong answers as part of the learning process and teachers are clear when student answers are not right   + Right is right   + Don’t round up for kids * Have planned for misconceptions and appropriate prompting to allow students to uncover their own misconceptions * Encourage students to answer in CAF * Encourage student to student discourse and debate * Use Stretch it with high achieving students |

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| **STUDENTS in GROUPS or PAIRS** |
| Priority 1 |
| * Push work on learning on students- they do the heavy lifting, not teachers * Put thought into student groups   + Homogeneous assigned   + Heterogeneous assigned   + Student choice * Make expectations clear (time, product, volume, roles and responsibilities, movement) * Circulate to provide feedback on content and collaboration * Circulate to look at student work to inform future instruction (attend to what they understand and where misconceptions are) |
| Priority 2 |
| * Use catch and release for clarifications and teachable moments (get everyone’s attention have them stop working and listen to instruction) * Hold students accountable through pencil to paper tasks * Ensure that learning is happening for all students in all groups * Do not interrupt groups when they are working– observe first then interject if need be |

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| **STUDENTS WORKING INDEPENDENTLY** |
| Priority 1 |
| * Push work on learning on students- they do the heavy lifting, not teachers * Make expectations clear (time, product, volume, roles and responsibilities, movement) * Circulate and check for understanding not just compliance * Don’t talk over independent work time (ie: don’t keep repeating directions, expectations, questions) * All students working all the time- students know what to do next if finished * Hold students accountable for checking over work when done as automatic next step |
| Priority 2 |
| * Use catch and release for clarifications and teachable moments (get everyone’s attention have them stop working and listen to instruction) * Give students hurdle-help through prompting so they can   + initiate the task   + get through roadblocks * Use knowledge of student responses to determine who shares * Have enrichment work for students who finish |

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| **MULTIPLE TEACHERS in a CLASSROOM** |
| Priority 1 |
| * All teachers teaching * Plan for both teachers tasks and locations * Be thoughtful about student seating so that 2nd teacher can support effectively without disruption |

**NHCS Best Practices for Behavior Management**

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| **MINDSET** |
| * Love your students and be excited to see every one of them every day * Build relationships * Model behaviors you expect from the students and treat all students with (respect, the right voice, patience, apologize) * Continually hold high expectations * Be thoughtful of how long students are asked to focus on one thing/engaged in one task * Students need to persevere through challenging academic tasks to grow * Work avoidance behaviors are unacceptable * Balance warm and strict * Be clear about expectations (include explaining why), use logical consequences(include explaining why), debrief behaviors (include explaining your feelings and reasoning) * Remember they are children * Remember that children make bad choices, they are not bad kids |

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| **INSTRUCTIONS FROM TEACHERS** |
| * Get attention from 100% of students when you ask for it * Ask for it if you want it (do kids need to be silent when you are passing out papers?) --if you ask for it get it (stand still, stop, and enforce)-- if you can’t get it don’t ask for it * If you want silent get silent, if you want quiet say quiet * If you want silent- you don’t break it either * Don’t SHHHHHHHH * Give a direction- stop, stand still, enforce/ensure compliance before moving on or helping students * Be clear whether you are telling or asking * Modulate the volume of your voice- don’t forget about quiet power |

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| **HOLDING ATTENTION on TASK** |
| * Use no opt out * Have students repeat directions, questions, other student’s answers * Don’t respond to call outs with anything but consequences * Use proximity and circulation * Think about body position and stand where you can see the most students (outside the circle) |

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| **SYSTEMS** |
| * Use behavior systems with fidelity for all students * Make students redo bad choices * Give options when appropriate * Follow through ALWAYS- sign in, call home, make them finish * Don’t let small stuff slide, especially at the beginning of the year, middle, and May- think *broken windows* * Build and follow routines * Organize them and you * Use language of SCHOLAR, community expectations, community values * Use attention phrase or cue – pause and get attention * Don’t let students use bathroom/water to avoid learning (Ex: They shouldn’t go during full class instruction, they shouldn’t go during learning multiple times a day- When they ask to go to the bathroom- tell them to ask again in 5) |

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| **EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE** |
| * Set kids up for success with your words, energy, planning, and clear expectations * Use humor * Apologize when you are wrong * If you are only Neutral and negative= kids think you are negative- therefore you MUST emphasize the positive * Allow excited on task talk * Highlight the positive |

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| **WHEN THEY ARE BAD, REALLY, REALLY BAD** |
| * Be firm and neutral in tone * Avoid power struggles   + Give a direction or correction and move on to other students allowing time for compliance * Never make empty threats * Never issue consequences when upset * Don’t react emotionally (unless you are deciding to show them emotion) * Only raise your voice on purpose * Do not give full class consequences for individual’s bad choices |

## Appendix B –Staffing Plan

Additional Staff FTEs – Middle School

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 |
| Science teacher | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Social Studies teacher | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Specialist teacher | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| SPED teacher | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Teaching fellow | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Add'l social studies/SPED |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |

Additional Staff FTEs – High School

|  | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Administration |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Business Manager |  |  | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Total* |  |  | *0.5* | *0.5* | *0.5* | *0.5* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9th |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| English Teacher |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Math Teacher |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Language Teacher |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Science Teacher |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| History Teacher |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Arts Teacher |  | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| P/E Teacher/Sports |  | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10th |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| English Teacher |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Math Teacher |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Language Teacher |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Science Teacher |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| History Teacher |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Tech Teacher |  |  | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11th |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| English Teacher |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Math Teacher |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Science Teacher |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| History Teacher |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Arts Teachers |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Support teachers - high needs students |  |  |  | 2 | 2 | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12th |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| English Teacher |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Math Teacher |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Science Teacher |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| History Teacher |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Total* |  | *6* | *12.5* | *20* | *25* | *25* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other Instructional |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Principal | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Dean of Curriculum & Instruction |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Operations person |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Dean of Discipline |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| College & Career Readiness |  |  | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Internship/Vocational Coord |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Building level sub |  |  |  | 0.5 | 1 | 1 |
| Psychologist |  |  | 0.25 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 |
| SPED Director |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| SPED staff - prof |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| ELL Teacher |  | 0.25 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| SPED staff - fellows |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Other Instructional Total* | *1* | *5.25* | *10.75* | *15* | *19* | *19* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Support / Clerical |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Facilities |  | 0.25 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Nurse |  | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Office Manager |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Cafeteria |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| *Total* |  | *0.75* | *3.5* | *4* | *4* | *4* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL | **1.0** | **12.0** | **27.25** | **39.5** | **48.5** | **48.5** |

## Appendix C– Financial Projections

*OVERVIEW:*

The expansion will roll out over six years beginning in FY17 with the hiring of a high school principal and extending into FY22 when 826 students will be enrolled in grades K1-12.

The first three years will result in an excess of expenditures (including capital expenditures) over revenues of $1.2 million, but a cash surplus will be generated in year four with an overall cash surplus over the six year expansion of $900,000.

No new administrative positions in finance, human resources, or development will be added to serve the expanded school with the exception of a .5 FTE additional business manager in year three.

We have been conservative in this budget in several ways: by calculating revenues based on student enrollment of 410 additional students while the actual number we plan to enroll is 428; incorporating low increases in tuition reimbursement and grant revenues; being generous in our estimates of starting salaries.

Our plan incorporates servicing additional students in our current facility for the first year of expansion by repurposing space and/or leasing mobile classrooms.

Given that we intend to have the first class of high school students in a new space in FY18, we have budgeted $900,000 for capital expenditures in FY17 to retrofit a building to serve our needs.

There is a contingency line of $100,000 built into each year for FY18-22 to allow for any unanticipated expenses.

*OPERATIONAL BUDGET:*

Revenue Assumptions

***Tuition****:* We have projected the per pupil reimbursement by factoring in a 1% increase from our FY15 rates and compounding that each year through FY22. In FY19, the second year in which we have high school students, we have incorporated a small increase by weighting the slightly higher tuition rate for high school students.

***Federal Grants****:*  We have budgeted federal grants such as Title I, IDEA, School Nutrition, etc. at $1,300 per student, which is consistent with our current program. No annual increases have been factored into this revenue.

***Program fees***: We have assumed a $500 per student fee for sports, clubs, after-school, field trips, etc. This amount is consistent with our current K1-8 fees.

***Grants, Donations and Financing****:*  We plan on underwriting the cash deficit the first three years through solicitation of foundation grants, use of some of the School’s cash reserves, additional debt through our $500,000 line of credit and borrowing allowed through our current debt structure.

Expense Assumptions

***Academic staffing***: In our pre-operational year of FY17, we have included a full year salary for a high school principal to begin planning for the start of the high school in FY18. We have budgeted a conservative $115,000 for that position. At full capacity, we have budgeted for an additional 42 instructional FTE’s to teach in the classroom. This will allow us to maintain a low student to teacher ratio of 9:1 at the high school level. The starting salaries are conservatively budgeted by using the average of our FY16 lowest and highest starting teacher salaries plus a $2,000 cushion, and compounding an increase of 3% per year. Salary increases are calculated over a three year cycle of 1.5%, 1.5% and 5% increases, which is consistent with the current NHCS staff compensation plan. We have also followed this methodology for other academic support staff such as school guidance counselors, psychologists, etc.

***Administrative staffing***: At full capacity we have an additional nurse, food services manager, and facilities manager, along with a .5 FTE business manager. These are budgeted to offer competitive salaries.

***Fringe*:** The fringe rate is calculated 15% of salaries, which is consistent with our current model.

***Professional services*:** Legal and audit fees, as well as other professional services are budgeted at $55,000 in the first year of new high school students with an increase of $20,000 per year after that.

***Consulting fees and partnerships***: Partnerships are budgeted at $80,000 per year beginning in FY18 with the arrival of high school students. At the high school level, part of the model involves partnering with some local colleges and businesses for our Extended Learning Opportunities.

***Program expenses***: This line is budgeted at $1,500 per student, which includes student books and supplies, field trips, etc. There is an additional allowance in years three, four, and five of the high school to allow for college tours, SAT fees, and test prep courses.

***Administrative***: This amount is based on current school expenses and increases by $25,000 per year in years two to six of the expansion.

***Maintenance***: When high school enrollment ramps up in a new space in FY18, maintenance costs are projected to be $250,000 with a 10% increase per year after that. This number includes the services of an outside cleaning company. The rate is based on current NHCS expenses.

***Lease of building****:* Based on conversations with other Boston Charter School CFOs who have recently moved into space in the NHCS area, rent expense is budgeted at $20 per square foot for 35,000 square feet beginning in FY18, which will be the first year with high school students. While we anticipate that this will be a five year lease, an increase of 1% per year is budgeted for each subsequent year. At full capacity this will result in approximately 115 square feet per student in the high school.

***Renovations****:* Given the scarcity of suitable space for schools in the Dorchester area, we anticipate having to do some considerable renovations to whatever space we acquire. Therefore, we have allowed for a $700,000 leasehold improvement budget in FY17 to prepare for incoming students in FY18. We have budgeted an additional $50,000 in FY18 and $25,000 in each subsequent year to allow for ongoing renovations.

***Technology*:** In FY17, in preparation for new students in the high school, there is $175,000 budgeted for technology, which would include infrastructure as well as computers for staff and students. In subsequent years, with the assumption that the infrastructure is in place, but allowing for additional computers, software, licenses, etc., there is $75,000, $60,000, $35,000, $25,000 and $15,000 budgeted, respectively, from FY18 to FY22.

***Furniture and equipment***: In FY17, in order to prepare for the first class of students in the new high school space, we have budgeted $125,000 to furnish the new building. This also includes some additional desks and other furniture in the existing K-8 building to accommodate new students. The furniture and fixtures budget declines over the successive years from $60,000 down to $15,000 as this line item transitions to a replacement budget.

*SUMMARY*

The financial model becomes self-sustaining in FY20, at which point it will start to produce surpluses as we increase our student population, enjoy economies of scale administratively and start-up expenses are behind us. In the early years of expansion where we are incurring cash deficits, the Management Team the Board of Trustees are confident that these gaps will be met through a combination of foundation grants, use of internal cash surpluses, and financing. Once the expanded school reaches steady state in year four of expansion, the surpluses generated going forward will allow the school to support the operations of the existing K-8 school, replenish its cash reserves, pay off any financing incurred, and move forward in a strengthened financial model that is able to serve more students.

***Operating Budget: Projected Revenues and Expenditures***

|  |  | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 | MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Enrollment & Staff* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| H/S Student Enrollment (FTE) |  | 0 | 60 | 132 | 210 | 276 | 286 | Assumption is that there will be attrition of 10% in grade 12 |  |  |
| Middle School Enrollment (FTE) |  | 60 | 82 | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 |  |  |  |
| Lower School Enrollment (FTE) |  | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | Assumes adding 4 additional 3rd & 4th graders |  |  |
| Instructional Staff (FTE) - M/S |  | 5 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | Assumes 5 new Gen Ed, 2 SPED and 1 Specialist teachers |  |  |
| Instructional Staff (FTE) - H/S |  | 0 | 7 | 17.25 | 26.5 | 34 | 34 | Staffing model creates a student-teacher ratio of 9 to 1 in FY22 (capacity). |  |  |
| *Revenue* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Per pupil rate - M/S & H/S |  | $14,596 | $14,742 | $15,046 | $15,481 | $16,109 | $16,421 | Rate is a per-pupil projected average. In FY17 based on 1% inc/yr over DESE FY15 proj avg |  |  |
| Medicaid per student |  | $50 | $50 | $50 | $50 | $50 | $50 | Rate is based on current NHCS average. |  |  |
| Program fees per student |  | $500 | $500 | $500 | $500 | $500 | $500 | Fee is projected average revenue from student involvement in: sports, clubs, after-school, summer-school, fundraising for trips, lunch costs, books, etc. |  |  |
| *Expenses* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compensation - teacher hiring salary |  | $54,769 | $56,412 | $58,104 | $59,848 | $61,643 | $63,492 | Assumes avg of BA/MA degree plus allowance for specialists |  |  |
| Compensation - salary growth |  |  | 1.5% | 1.5% | 5.0% | 1.5% | 1.5% | Based on NHCS Staff Comp Plan 3 yr cycle of 1.5%, 1.5% and 3% |  |  |
| Fringe rate |  | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | Rate is based on current NHCS average. |  |  |
| Bulding Utilities and Maintenance growth |  |  |  | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | Rate is based on increased needs as enrollment increases |  |  |
| New Facility Square Footage |  |  | 35,000 | 35,000 | 35,000 | 35,000 | 35,000 | Used goal of approx 120 square feet / student at capacity |  |  |
| Lease cost per square foot - starting |  |  | $20 | $20 | $20 | $21 | $21 | Based on projected comparables for Dorchester properties |  |  |
| Lease growth |  |  |  | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |  |  |  |
| *Capital Expenditures* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Facility Useful Life |  | 39 years |  |  |  |  |  | Standard IRS numbers for depreciation. |  |  |
| Technology Useful Life |  | 5 years |  |  |  |  |  | Standard IRS numbers for depreciation. |  |  |
| Furniture and Equipment Useful Life |  | 7 years |  |  |  |  |  | Standard IRS numbers for depreciation. |  |  |
| *Analysis* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Square feet per pupil - H/S |  |  | N/A | 265 | 167 | 127 | 122 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OPERATING REVENUES |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Per pupil tuition |  | $992,528 | $2,211,300 | $3,851,776 | $5,170,654 | $6,443,600 | $6,732,610 |  |  |  |
| DOE Entitlement Grants |  | $88,400 | $195,000 | $332,800 | $434,200 | $520,000 | $533,000 | Grants such as Title I, IDEA, Charter School Start-Up Assistance, etc. Grants were estimated at $1300/student. |  |  |
| Medicaid |  | $3,400 | $7,500 | $12,800 | $16,700 | $20,000 | $20,500 | Corresponds to line D above. |  |  |
| Program fees |  | $34,000 | $75,000 | $128,000 | $167,000 | $200,000 | $205,000 | Corresponds to line E above. |  |  |
| Interest Income |  | $5,000 | $5,000 | $5,000 | $5,000 | $5,000 | $5,000 |  |  |  |
| TOTAL REVENUES |  | $1,123,328 | $2,493,800 | $4,330,376 | $5,793,554 | $7,188,600 | $7,496,110 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OPERATING EXPENDITURES |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compensation - Administrative (Professional) |  |  |  | $35,000 | $35,525 | $36,058 | $37,861 | Assumes we will utilize current NHCS Admin staff with addition of .5 FTE admin in FY20 |  |  |
| Compensation - Teachers M/S |  | $249,976 | $398,350 | $404,325 | $419,403 | $430,909 | $437,373 |  |  |  |
| Compensation - Teachers H/S |  |  | $343,472 | $730,379 | $1,192,109 | $1,534,136 | $1,556,923 |  |  |  |
| Compensation - Other (Professional) |  | $115,000 | $423,725 | $757,768 | $966,424 | $1,212,764 | $1,251,899 |  |  |  |
| Compensation - Support/Clerical |  |  | $52,500 | $151,575 | $189,906 | $192,754 | $197,500 | At scale, staffing model includes: facility manager, night custodians, nurse, cafeteria worker, and administrative assistant. |  |  |
| Fringe |  | $54,746 | $182,707 | $311,857 | $420,505 | $510,993 | $522,233 | Is equal to 15% of salaries as is consistent with current school operations |  |  |
| Professional Services |  | $5,000 | $55,000 | $75,000 | $95,000 | $115,000 | $135,000 | Includes accounting, legal, translater services, etc. |  |  |
| Consulting Fees & Partnerships |  | $15,000 | $80,000 | $80,000 | $80,000 | $80,000 | $80,000 | Projected amount based on current NHCS consulting expenses. |  |  |
| School and Student Expenses |  | $102,000 | $225,000 | $384,000 | $516,000 | $625,000 | $650,000 | Includes food, books & supplies, field trips, enrichment activities, etc. Costs were estimated at $1500/student until FY20 when the cost of juniors / seniors would increase (for college coursework, applications, school visits, etc) |  |  |
| General & Administration |  | $25,000 | $225,000 | $250,000 | $275,000 | $300,000 | $325,000 | Includes printing, supplies, tech supplies, etc. Rate is based on current NHCS expenses. |  |  |
| Building Utilities and Maintenance |  | $30,000 | $250,000 | $275,000 | $299,500 | $326,450 | $356,095 | Includes utilities, cleaning company, security, HVAC, inspection, etc. Rate is based on current NHCS expenses. |  |  |
| Lease |  | $- | $700,000 | $707,000 | $714,070 | $721,211 | $728,423 | FY18 Assumes HS students will be at NHCS. FY19-22 correspond to lines L, M, N & O above. |  |  |
| Contingency |  |  | $100,000 | $100,000 | $100,000 | $100,000 | $100,000 | Allowance for unanticipated expenditures |  |  |
| Depreciation |  | $184,522 | $210,593 | $231,700 | $251,318 | $255,462 | $224,606 | corresponds to depreciation of Capital Expenditures on lines P,Q, & R. |  |  |
| TOTAL EXPENSES |  | $781,244 | $3,246,347 | $4,493,604 | $5,554,760 | $6,440,738 | $6,602,913 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Change in Net Assets (net income) |  | $342,084 | $(752,547) | $(163,228) | $238,794 | $747,862 | $893,197 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| CASH FLOW |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Add back (non-cash) depreciation and amortization items: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Change in Net Assets (net income) |  | $342,084 | $(752,547) | $(163,228) | $238,794 | $747,862 | $893,197 |  |  |  |
| Depreciation and Amortization |  | $184,522 | $210,593 | $231,700 | $251,318 | $255,462 | $224,606 |  |  |  |
| Cash Available for Bond Principal & Reserves |  | $526,606 | $(541,954) | $68,472 | $490,112 | $1,003,324 | $1,117,803 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Capital Expenditures* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Capital Outlay Facility |  | $(700,000) | $(50,000) | $(25,000) | $(25,000) | $(25,000) | $(25,000) |  |  |  |
| Capital Outlay Technology |  | $(175,000) | $(75,000) | $(60,000) | $(35,000) | $(35,000) | $(25,000) |  |  |  |
| Capital Outlay Furniture & Equip. |  | $(125,000) | $(60,000) | $(55,000) | $(30,000) | $(25,000) | $(15,000) |  |  |  |
| FYE Forecasted Excess/(Negative) Cash |  | $(473,394) | $(726,954) | $(71,528) | $400,112 | $918,324 | $1,052,803 |  |  |  |
| FY17-FY19 Funding Need |  | **$(1,271,876)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**NHCS submitted supplementary materials to provide additional information.**

The Department has included selections of the school’s additional submission on pages 74 through 80. A number of the supplementary materials were presentation slideshows from recent board meetings regarding the planning and preparation for the proposed expansion. All documents submitted by the school that are not included below are available upon request.

**Compliance Update to NHCS Amendment Application**

In the “Compliance” section of the expansion-related amendment application, NHCS stated that we “have taken affirmative steps to strengthen the [ELL] program.” We have sustained and deepened the corrective actions that led to a successful close of our review, including:

1. We have helped Keumjoo Armstrong, our ELL teacher who was working under a license waiver last year, to obtain her preliminary teaching license (number 484162) in English as a Second Language for grades PreK-6 as well as grades 5-12. Cara McCarthy is still our ELL Program Director, and also serves as the Lower School Principal
2. We are very confident in the accuracy and completeness of our ELL records since we began using the Department-approved program folder checklist. We conducted a self-initiated ELL file audit in October this year and determined that all Home Language Surveys have been sent and all students’ MCAS, ACCESS, and Progress Reports are included in the files.
3. We have made strides on ELL curriculum development. The school’s new Assistant Director for Curriculum and Instruction has joined the effort this semester and is working with the ESL teacher on a grade-by-grade Curriculum Framework document that can serve as a backbone for our ELL curriculum. We are also aware that a statewide planning committee will develop ESL Model Curriculum Units (MCUs) to be rolled out in 2016 and we plan to supplement our curriculum with the model units as well when they are released.

NHCS has continued to advance in other arenas of compliance as well. We have begun posting all of our full board and subcommittee meeting notices directly to our website, as recommended by the Open Meeting Law, and we have ensured that all our trustees understand and are using the online system to complete disclosures, trainings, and certifications. We submitted the required affirmation in September to the Department of Public Health that we reviewed our required sports-related head injury policy. And finally, this fall DESE approved, our board adopted, and our family handbook includes our revised expulsion policy in compliance with the Massachusetts School Discipline Law.

December 2015

**Initial Planning re: Onboarding Students to NHCS High School**

All high school students, new and returning:

* Math and ELA pre-assessments; social/emotional pre-assessments
* Student and parent/s meeting with Advisor to set expectations and establish sense of partnership
* Parent Orientation led by Principal

All *new* high school students:

* Fall Orientation (Monday afternoons, Sept-Oct)
  + “Scholar Academy” to teach NHCS expectations, values and mindset
  + Orientation to the Clover model for social/emotional learning
  + Team and community building activities

Some high school students, as determined by need:

* Social/emotional learning groups akin to Men in the Making as targeted tier 2 and 3 interventions
* Range of academic interventions and supports built into the schedule
* Connection to outside services and programs on case-by-case basis

**Student Testimonials about Entering NHCS at Later Grades**   
(Student Names Removed)

**Male Student #1, 8th grade; Neighborhood House student since 5th grade**

In my previous school, the teachers just used text books. Everything we learned all came out of a book. Here at NHCS, they teach us how to think, how to problem solve, how to work towards the answer.

I had a hard time my first few years. I couldn’t focus, and sometimes I got angry and I couldn’t communicate – and my mom would get a phone call from the school almost every week! But my teachers, they really stuck with me. Mr. Elliser, my sixth grade teacher, especially, helped me learn how to take responsibility for my actions.

**Female Student #2, 8th grade; Neighborhood House student since 7th grade**

I went to many different schools – in Cambridge, in Georgia, and in a BPS school – before I came to Neighborhood House. My previous schools were all much bigger, and they didn’t go out of their way to help me succeed. Neighborhood House expects more, and gives us more support.

 My first week of school at Neighborhood House, we all took part in Scholar Academy, where we learned from the teachers and from each other about what it means to be a Neighborhood House Scholar – how we should act, what are the expectations of us.

**Female Student #3, 8th grade; Neighborhood House student since 4th grade**

My transition to Neighborhood House was hard, because I came from a school where they didn’t care. There is a lot more homework here, but there is also a lot more support. Ms. Skeadis helps me figure out strategies for doing my homework, and keeps me on task every day.

I appreciate the chance to do revisions on my work, but I also understand that I need to do a good job the first time. My teachers have helped me realize that.

NHCS is a great environment for everyone. Teachers are open and make me feel comfortable, like I can tell them anything. Everyone can find a teacher that they’re able to talk to.

**Male Student #2, 8th grade; New to Neighborhood House 8th grade**

My previous school was another charter school. I made the decision to transfer to Neighborhood House because I wanted more freedom, more responsibility, and more help with classes that I am not doing my best in.

My previous school was much bigger, and teachers didn’t have the time to interact with us outside of class. Here teachers have more time to talk to students about what they can do better. When we have break, I can go talk to any of my teachers.

My first day, Mr. Hughes showed me to the cafeteria, showed me where to sit, and everyone introduced themselves. Everyone was friendly and welcoming.

Sample Student Schedule, Caris - 9th grade

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Monday | Tuesday | | Wednesday | | Thursday | Friday | |
| 8:15-9:00 | | Early Morning Programming | | | | | | | |
| 9:00-9:50 | | Literary Analysis and Composition | World History I | | Algebra 1 | | Physics | Literary Analysis and Composition | |
| 9:50-10:40 | | Physics | Literary Analysis and Composition | | World History I | | Algebra 1 | Physics | |
| 10:40-10:50 | | break | | | | | | | |
| 10:50-11:40 | | Algebra 1 | Physics | | Literary Analysis and Composition | | World History I | Algebra 1 | |
| 11:40-12:30 | | World History I | Algebra 1 | | Physics | | Literary Analysis and Composition | World History I | |
| 12:30-12:55 | | Advisory | Reading | | ~~Reading~~ Counseling | | Discussion | Advisory | |
| 12:55-1:15 | | Lunch | | | | | | | |
| 1:15-2:15 | | Early dismissal | Spanish I | | Spanish I | | Spanish I | PE/Personal Wellness | |
| 2:15-3:15 | | CCR-“Who am I?” | | Elective | | CCR-“Who am I?” | Elective | |
| 3:15-4:15 | | Arts | | Arts | | Elective | Spanish I | |
| 4:15-5:00 | | After School Programming | | | | | | |
| 5:00-6:00 | |
| Core Grade Level Content | | | Student Selected Programming | | | | |
| Arts | | Electives | | |
| English Language Arts  Mathematics  Lab Science  History  College and Career Readiness (CCR)  Foreign Language (math intervention/ELL Support) | | | Visual art  Music  Performing Arts | | ELA intervention/enrichment Visual Art  Math enrichment Music  Science enrichment Performing Arts  History enrichment Technology  Foreign Language  Commit to the common good (civic engagement)\*\* | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Extracurricular and Support Programming | |
| Early Morning | After School |
| Academic Course Support; Fitness; Clubs\*; Test Prep | Academic Course Support ; Athletics; Clubs\* |

\*Clubs determined by student interest (options might include: yearbook, chess, debate, community service, gay straight alliance, student government)

\*\*Required for 1 quarter in 9th or 10th grade

Sample Student Schedule, Wilson- 11th grade

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 8:15-9:00 | Early Morning Programming | | | | |
| 9:00-9:50 | Math Foundations I | English Foundations I | Math Foundations I | Chemistry | Math Foundations I |
| 9:50-10:40 | Chemistry | US History II | English Foundations I | US History II | Chemistry |
| 10:40-10:50 | break | | | | |
| 10:50-11:40 | US History II | Chemistry | US History II | English Foundations I | US History II |
| 11:40-12:30 | English Foundations I | Math Foundations II | Chemistry | Math Foundations I | English Foundations I |
| 12:30-12:55 | Advisory | Reading | Reading | Discussion | Advisory |
| 12:55-1:15 | Lunch | | | | |
| 1:15-2:15 | Early dismissal  (Extended Learning @Cleveland Community Center) | Intervention | Extended Learning  @Cleveland Community Center | Intervention | Intervention |
| 2:15-3:15 | Elective | Elective | Elective |
| 3:15-4:15 | CCR “How do I get there?” | CCR “How do I get there?” | PE/Personal Wellness |
| 4:15-5:00 | After School Programming | | | |
| 5:00-6:00 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Core Grade Level Content | Student Selected Programming | |
| Extended Campus Learning | Electives |
| English Language Arts  Mathematics  Lab Science  History  College and Career Readiness (CCR)  Foreign Language (math intervention/ELL Support) | Courses online  Courses at UMASS\*\*  Internships  Independent Study  Credit Recovery | ELA intervention/enrichment Visual Art  Math enrichment Music  Science enrichment Performing Arts  History enrichment Technology  Foreign Language  Commit to the common good (civic engagement)\*\* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Extracurricular and Support Programming | |
| Early Morning | After School |
| Academic Course Support  Fitness  Clubs\*  Test Prep | Academic Course Support  Athletics  Clubs\* |

\*Clubs determined by student interest (options might include: yearbook, chess, debate, community service, gay straight alliance, student government)

\*\*UMASS Boston or other local college or university

Sample Teacher Schedule, Ms. Gayle- Geometry

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 8:15-9:00 |  | *fitness* |  |  |  |
| 9:00-9:50 | 9th grade geometry accelerated track |  | 10th grade geometry section A | 9th grade geometry accelerated track | 10th grade geometry  Section B |
| 9:50-10:40 |  | 10th grade geometry  Section B | 9th grade geometry accelerated track | 10th grade geometry section A |  |
| 10:40-10:50 | break | | | | |
| 10:50-11:40 | 10th grade geometry section A | 10th grade geometry section A | 10th grade geometry  Section B |  | 9th grade geometry accelerated track |
| 11:40-12:30 | 10th grade geometry  Section B | 9th grade geometry accelerated track |  | 10th grade geometry  Section B | 10th grade geometry section A |
| 12:30-12:55 | Advisory | 9th grade geometry | Reading | Discussion | Advisory |
| 12:55-1:15 | Lunch | | Advisee open lunch | Lunch | Lunch duty |
| 1:15-2:15 | Professional Development | 10th grade Math intervention | 10th grade Math intervention | 10th grade Math intervention | Planning with math coach and SPED teacher |
| 2:15-3:15 |  | Elective-Geometry  For 10th grade students taking Alg II |  |  |
| 3:15-4:15 | Elective-Geometry  For 10th grade students taking Alg II | Office duty | Elective-Geometry  For 10th grade students taking Alg II | 10th grade Math intervention |
| 4:15-5:00 |  | | | |
| 5:00-6:00 |

1. Data from 2010 U.S. Census. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Data from 2014 DESE School Profiles. We note that the physical address of Boston Latin Academy places it within Roxbury rather than Dorchester, but it is listed under Dorchester on the DESE website. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Data from the DESE website shows that the number of school-aged Boston residents increased from 71,533 in 2010 to 73,269 in 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. If available, the submission should include comparative performance data, national, statewide, or district(s), for all students and for one or more targeted subgroups in comparable grades. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For example, the Department does not report MCAS *achievement percentages* for subgroups with fewer than 10 students included, or MCAS *growth percentiles* for subgroups with fewer than 20 students included. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A student is *high needs* if he or she is designated as either low income, or ELL, or former ELL, or a student with disabilities. A former ELL student is a student not currently an ELL, but had been at some point in the two previous academic years. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)